



# Cheshire East SEND and AP 'One Plan'

Special Educational Needs and  
Disability and Alternative Provision  
Strategy and Development Plan  
2025 – 2028

May 2025

Cheshire East  
SEND and AP Partnership



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### **We would like to thank everyone who is and has been involved in the development and delivery of our SEND and AP ‘One Plan’, including:**

- All the children, young people, parents and carers who gave their time and energy, and honestly told us how it is
- Our education professionals, including SEND and specialist support teams, and staff within educational settings
- Early help and social care professionals in Children’s and Adults’ Services
- Health professionals within the Integrated Care Board and provider services
- All members of the Cheshire East 0-25 SEND Partnership at all levels

## 1. Glossary

Term	Meaning
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a condition that affects people's behaviour. People with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse.
AP	Alternative Provision, which is education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education, or education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion.
Autism (ASC or ASD)	Autism (sometimes referred to as Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)) is a diverse group of conditions related to brain development that impact how a person perceives and socializes with others, which can cause problems in social interaction and communication.
Coproduction	This is an approach whereby professionals, children and young people and their families work together as equal partners to plan services that affect them. In Cheshire East, we have a shared definition of coproduction called ' <a href="#">TOGETHER</a> ', which supports open and clear communication and accountability to all involved in providing support to children and young people with SEND.
CWP	Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust who provide health and care services for local people, including mental health, learning disability, community physical health and all-age disability care.
Dedicated Schools Grant management plan	A document which is a requirement from the Department for Education (DfE) where a local authority has a deficit position on their high needs dedicated schools grant (DSG); this provides a financial and EHCP 7 year forecast.

Term	Meaning
Delivering Better Value programme (DBV)	The Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV in SEND) programme is aiming to support local authorities with substantial deficit issues in the high needs block of their DSG, and their local area partners, to improve the delivery of SEND services for children and young people whilst working towards financial sustainability.
DfE	Department for Education.
EHC	Education, Health and Care.
EHCP	An Education, Health and Care Plan is a legal document that sets out a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs. It describes the extra help that will be given to meet those needs and how that help will support them to achieve what they want to in their life.
EHE	Elective Home Education, where a parent or carer educates their child at home.
ELSA	ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) is an intervention that was designed to build the capacity of schools to support the emotional needs of their pupils from within their own resources.
EOTAS	Where a child or young person is 'Educated Otherwise Than At School' as the local authority have deemed it inappropriate for their special educational provision to be delivered in any school or post-16 educational setting.
First Concerns	Children and young people who have been identified as having emerging difficulties.
High Needs Funding Block	The funding allocated and received from central government by local authorities for pupils with SEND and high needs.
ICB	NHS Cheshire and Merseyside – the integrated care board (ICB) for the region – is responsible for planning NHS services for our population, which includes the care you receive at your GP practice, local pharmacy, NHS dentist, NHS opticians, or at hospital.

Term	Meaning
iTHRIVE	The <a href="#">iTHRIVE framework</a> aims to help us to think differently about the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and families and how the system responds to that need. The goal of this redesign programme is to facilitate the shift from a tiered, single-service delivery model to a comprehensive and resource efficient system approach, focused on the needs of children, young people, and their families.
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This is an assessment of how well the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people living in Cheshire East are being met.
NEET	When a young person is not in education, employment or training.
LGA	Local Government Association.
Liquidlogic	This refers to the electronic case management system used by the local authority for education and social care work.
Local Offer for SEND	The Local Offer for SEND lets parents, young people and professionals know what special educational needs and disabilities services are available in the borough, and who can access them.
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is responsible for inspecting the effectiveness of local area services for children with SEND.
Parent Carer Forum	The Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum is a voluntary group who work in partnership with professionals within the Cheshire East local authority area to ensure the voice of parents and carers with children that have additional needs is heard throughout the decision-making process of service initiatives.
Quality Assurance	The maintenance of a desired level of quality in service delivery by routinely evaluating stages in the process.
Quality First Teaching	A style of teaching that emphasises high quality, inclusive teaching for all pupils in a class.

Term	Meaning
Resource provision	A mainstream school receives additional funding to provide extra specialist support or facilities for children with SEND.
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy helps people who have speech and communication difficulties. They also help people with eating, drinking and swallowing problems.
SEN	Special Educational Needs (SEN) covers a wide range of needs. These include behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech, language and communication, hearing impairment, visual impairment, multi-sensory impairment, physical disability and autism.
SEN Support	The process by which schools and settings assess the needs of children, and then provide appropriate support.
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. The SENCO is responsible for the operation of a school's SEN policy and coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN, including those who have SEN Support or an EHC plan.
SEND	A child or young person who has a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support, which is shortened to SEND.
SEND Partnership	A multi-agency partnership arrangement which leads and drives developments around support, processes and provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) aged 0-25 years in Cheshire East.
SEND and AP Partnership Board	A group made up of senior representatives that drive and monitor the work of the Partnership in line with this plan
Toolkit for Inclusion	Explains responsibilities and outlines the provision and support that the Local Authority expects to be in place in all educational settings which support Cheshire East children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## 2. Introduction

This Cheshire East Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy and Development Plan outlines in a single document all of the work to be carried out by the Cheshire East SEND Partnership to develop and improve local support for children and young people that have SEND and / or attend alternative provision.

It is referred to as our Cheshire East SEND and AP 'One Plan' as we feel this is a clear, simple name that can be easily understood by all partners and clearly reflects both the concept of holding all actions in a single document, and all partners working as one with a shared vision to deliver our improvements.

We have ambitious plans to improve services and outcomes for children and young people with SEND across our area and we know that we have much to do to ensure that the experiences and outcomes for all children and young people with SEND across our area are consistently positive.

## 3. Our Vision

**“Together we will make Cheshire East a great place to be young”.**

We believe that...

- Children and young people are best supported within their families and their communities
- All children and young people should enjoy the best education which prepares them to thrive in adulthood
- Cheshire East families and communities are strong and resilient, with the right help, by the right people, at the right time

Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is the same as for all children and young people - that they achieve well in all aspects of their lives and are happy, fulfilled and play an active role in their communities. For children and young people and their parents and carers, this means that their experiences will be of a system which is supportive of everyone and we ensure our resources and energy are applied efficiently. Their special educational needs and disabilities will be picked up at the earliest point with support routinely put

in place quickly, and their parents and carers will know what services they can reasonably expect to be provided. Children and young people and their parents and carers will be fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve.

## 4. Our Commitment

As a SEND Partnership, all relevant organisations in Cheshire East are committed to providing the best quality education and support for all children and young people to ensure they achieve the best possible outcomes.

We want all our children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be **HAPI**:

Happy and healthy  
Achieving their potential  
Part of their communities  
Independent as possible, making choices about their future.

## 5. Our Priorities

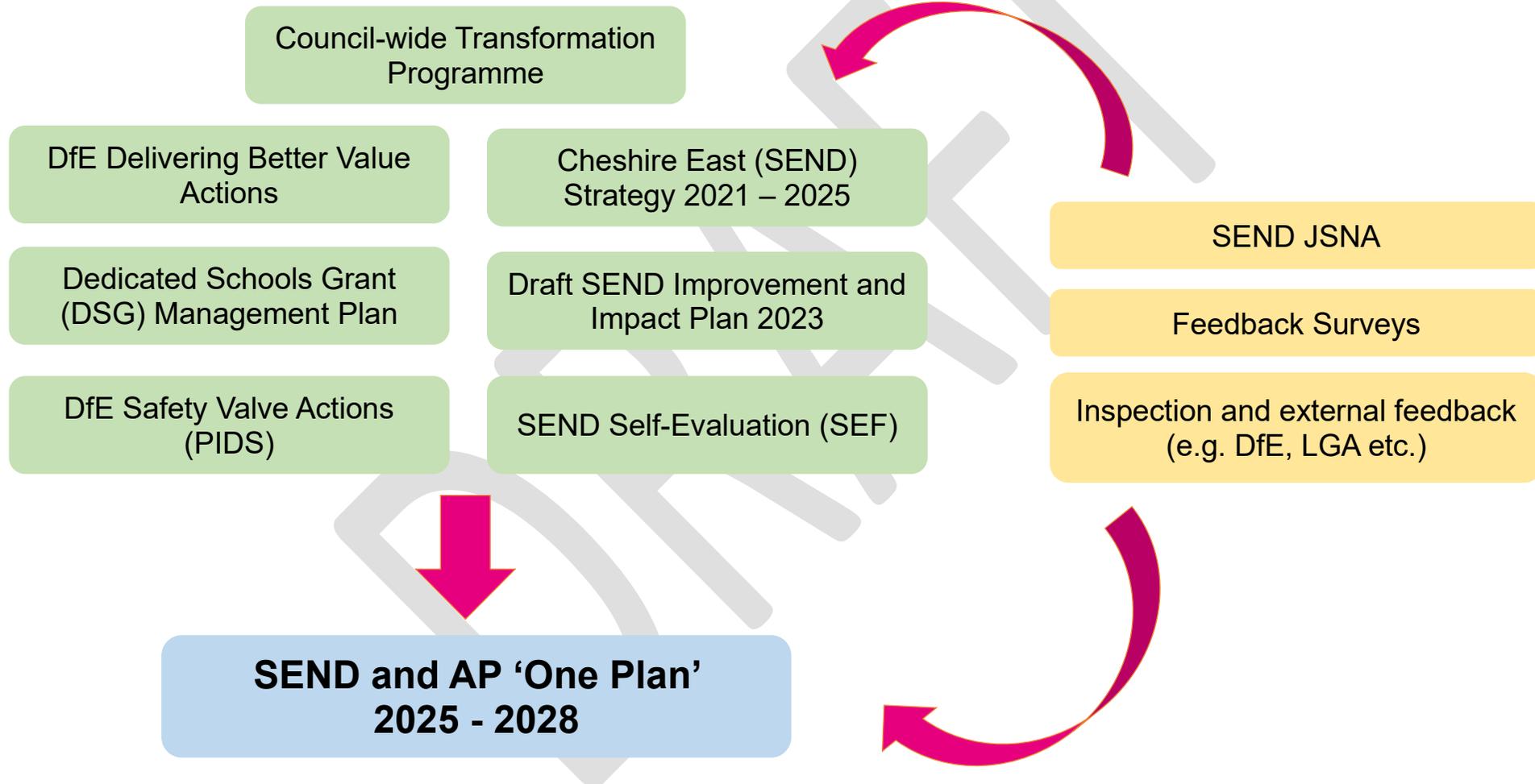
In order to achieve our shared partnership vision and commitment, we want all our children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to have:

The **Right Support** in  
The **Right Place** at  
The **Right Time**

We have identified specific areas for improvement and dedicated actions to further develop local processes, support and services in these three priority areas, which are outlined in the [‘Development Plan’](#) section of this document.

## 6. Context

In preparing our SEND and AP 'One Plan', we were not starting from a blank page; instead, we were required to collate and build on a wide variety of feedback and previous local, regional and national coproduced work to identify and improve areas for development across the SEND Partnership, as outlined in the below diagram:



Our previous *Cheshire East Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2021 – 2025* was originally prepared as *The SEND strategy 2021 – 2024* and approved in November 2021. This was then later refreshed in April 2023 to reflect significant changes within the national and local landscape for SEND.

Since the April 2023 refresh of our previous strategy, there have been further major national and local changes relating to SEND and wider children's and adults' services, including:

## **Work to address increasing financial pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**

Like many local authorities, Cheshire East Council has a Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit position. As at 31 March 2024, this is £79.5 million (which is £10.1 million better than previously forecast).

As a requirement of the DSG grant conditions, local authorities must have a DSG management plan in place. As at 11 November 2024, our 7-year DSG management plan gives a forecast unmitigated total deficit position for 2030-31 of £1.07 billion, reducing to £236.7 million by the end of 2030/31 (where we should also be spending within the forecast available grant in-year) if the plan is implemented successfully, with mitigations focusing on providing the **right support in the right place at the right time**.

The council took part in the Department for Education's (DfE) Delivering Better Value programme (DBV) during 2022/23. However, despite our engagement, the opportunities identified within the DBV programme, combined with the mitigations in the DSG management plan at that time, were not sufficient to address the recurring in-year overspends and deficit position. Later in 2023, Cheshire East Council were invited to take part in the DfE's Safety Valve intervention programme. Council colleagues worked with a DfE advisor to build on the work and priority areas identified through the DBV programme; additional improvement actions were identified and the DSG management plan was fundamentally rewritten. Council colleagues submitted the revised DSG management plan to DfE in January 2024 along with 9 Project Initiation Documents (PIDs; which outlined improvement objectives and actions) and a capital bid. Whilst Ministers

decided they were unable to enter into a Safety Valve agreement with Cheshire East at that time, a DfE advisor continued to work with us on our improvement journey. We have ensured that all ongoing improvement actions identified through this work are captured in this plan.

## **Completing our self-evaluation and identifying areas for development**

As part of our ongoing standard evaluation activity, alongside inspection preparation activities, colleagues across the SEND Partnership regularly update our SEND self-evaluation to ensure that it reflects recent improvements and feedback. SEND improvement actions from a previous iteration of our self-evaluation were captured through a drafted improvement plan presented to the previous SEND Executive Leadership Board, and we have worked to ensure that this 'One Plan' addresses the areas for development identified in our most recent self-evaluation, along with any actions that were still needed from the previously drafted SEND Improvement Plan. A refresh of our local SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) has also been undertaken, and we have had further feedback from partnership SEND surveys, which have also informed the priorities and actions with this document.

## **Inspections**

An Ofsted inspection in February - March 2024 gave Cheshire East's children's services an overall grading of inadequate. A comprehensive Children's Services Improvement Plan has been agreed which clearly sets out the actions that will be taken to address the inspection findings and improve our offer for children and young people. To aid consistency and joint working, we have worked to align the content and format of our SEND and AP 'One Plan', and particularly our Development Plan section and monitoring activity, with this document.

Cheshire East has previously had SEND inspections from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2018 and 2021, which highlighted a number of areas for development. We expect an area SEND inspection under the latest [area SEND inspection framework](#) during the delivery of this plan, and we will ensure that any learning is used to further inform our development actions.

## National improvement work

Activity has been taking place nationally to develop and pilot the recommendations set out in the DfE's SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan published in March 2023. It is not yet known if or how the July 2024 change in national government will affect the implementation of this plan.

## Wider Council improvement work and regional health work

We needed to ensure that our plans align with ongoing work being undertaken within the council's transformation programme and health improvements across Cheshire and Merseyside.

## 7. Need in Cheshire East

An updated and comprehensive [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#) for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been developed alongside the production of this 'One Plan' document. Each themed JSNA reviews the health and social care needs of our population, and our SEND JSNA provides detailed information on local needs, available support and potential barriers to support, which have helped to shape our priorities and actions in this document.

**4,854 children and young people (aged 0-25)** living in Cheshire East have an **education, health and care (EHC) plan** (as at December 2024). In addition, we have **5,906 pupils on SEN support** in our maintained schools and academies (January 2024 census).

The main needs of our children with EHCPs are around **social, emotional, and mental health needs (SEMH)**, which is **higher in Cheshire East** than all comparators, and **speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)**, which is in line with our comparator areas. We have a very similar rate of children with autism (ASD) to our statistical neighbours but this is significantly lower than national or regional. Our rates of children with visual/hearing/multiple impairments and physical disabilities are very close to all comparators. The table that follows is from the January 2024 school census for children with EHCPs:

Social emotional mental health needs (SEMH)	28%
Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)	28%
Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)	17%
Moderate learning difficulties (MLD)	10%
Severe learning difficulties (SLD)	6%
All others	12%

## Increased number of EHCPs

Managing need and therefore demand for our SEND services is **one of the biggest challenges** for the 0-25 SEND Partnership.

In recent years (up to 2022), local EHCP growth had consistently been in the region of **18% per annum** against a national picture of approx. 9% per annum, highlighting Cheshire East as an outlier. During 2023, our growth in EHCPs was **approx. 13.5% per annum** against a national picture of approx. 11.4% per annum, and Cheshire East EHCP numbers have **grown by 70% over the last four years** (2,827 in Sept 2020 to 4,816 in Sept 2024). This is **projected to increase to 10,455 by 2030-2031 if our DSG Management Plans are not successful**.



## 8. Working TOGETHER

The Cheshire East 0-25 SEND Partnership is a multi-agency partnership arrangement which leads and drives developments around support, processes and provision for children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 years in Cheshire East. It also covers support for children and young people that attend alternative provision (AP) and includes representatives from both children's and adults' services within the following organisations and groups:

- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board
- Providers of health services
- Educational settings (early years providers, schools and further education providers)

Throughout this document, the word 'we' has been used many times on purpose because, without us all working TOGETHER, we won't achieve the positive experiences and excellent outcomes that we want for our children and young people with SEND - 'we' represents everyone in the Cheshire East 0-25 SEND Partnership, including children and young people, parents and carers, and professionals across all services and settings.

We strive for all work to develop and deliver our SEND and AP 'One Plan' to be premised on our TOGETHER principles of coproduction.

'TOGETHER' in Cheshire East is outlined in the poster to the right, and was created by our children and young people, in conjunction with a range of professionals and parent carers, as our shared and more easily understood definition of coproduction.

In Cheshire East, we aim to work TOGETHER and adopt an 'experts by experience' approach that ensures that those receiving or delivering services help to shape them. Everyone in the Cheshire East SEND Partnership is committed to working in partnership to develop and shape our services. Children, young people, parents, carers, early years' providers, schools and colleges, health and social care professionals are the people that are best placed to know what is needed and what works

well. This plan has been coproduced with these key stakeholders, and they will continue to be involved in helping us deliver our priorities and in evaluating what difference we are making. This includes continuing to gather their views through our annual SEND partnership surveys and other ongoing feedback mechanisms.



**TOGETHER in Cheshire East**

**TOGETHER is our shared definition of coproduction in Cheshire East because it is inclusive to all.**

- T**eamwork when designing, delivering and evaluating individual support and services
- O**pen-minded ideas and discussions
- G**enuine communication for all parties involved
- E**qual partners help to shape and improve support for all
- T**rust each other to make the right decisions
- H**onest
- E**ngage and empower children, young people, adults and families
- R**espect for everyone's views and opinions

**Working TOGETHER as equal partners towards a common goal for all of our children, young people, adults living in Cheshire East.**

**Our TOGETHER Values and Commitment**

We will...	We won't...
• Listen to your views	• Use jargon or acronyms
• Communicate honestly	• Give too much information
• Trust each other	• Rush meetings
• Be person centred	• Take too long to complete our actions
• Adapt to people's needs	• Be judgemental
• Respect and value all opinions	
• Do what we say we will	

The voice of children and young people will be paramount, and will be gathered in a number of formats, and at various points in time. We will engage children and young people with SEND throughout our development journey in developing and delivering improvements, and their views will influence delivery at a child, service and strategic level. A Shadow SEND Partnership Board has been established to have ongoing dialogue with children and young people with SEND about the services and support that they receive and to create meaningful positive change based on their lived experiences and voices, and their views are shared at each meeting of the SEND and AP Partnership Board. Likewise, we will also ensure that we capture the views of parents and carers and utilise opportunities to build positive relationships. Our established Parent Carer Forum have a regular slot to share feedback from their members at each SEND and AP Partnership Board meeting, and representatives from the forum are key members of our partnership governance groups. We will also continue to engage with frontline practitioners and managers across the partnership to ensure we are all delivering improvements TOGETHER, and we will ensure their feedback informs our evaluation of impact.

Things that make me feel **INCLUDED**:

- Being listened too.
- Being invited out.
- Someone choosing to sit with me.
- School. Teachers.
- My friends. My mum.
- Being asked questions about the things I enjoy.

How I feel when I'm **INCLUDED**:

- I- inspired.
- N- Needed.
- C- considered
- L- Lucky
- U- understood.
- D- delighted
- E- Excited.
- D- Dependable.



## 9. What our children and young people, parents and carers, and partnership staff tell us

Detailed surveys were carried out by the SEND partnership in 2023 and 2025 with our children and young people with SEND and their parents/carers, as well as with staff within our educational settings and wider partnership, with a 38% increase in total respondents in 2025 (from 2023). The below outlines some of the findings from these surveys:

### The Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

- In 2025, 70% of children and young people felt their EHCP completely expressed what they think and need at school (69% in 2023), with a further 25% feeling they partially did (23% in 2023).
- 87% of children and young people in the 2025 survey felt their EHCP would make things much or a little easier at school (92% in 2023)
- In 2025, 69% of parents/carers (72% in 2023) and 70% of educational setting respondents (78% in 2023) felt the EHCPs reflected the needs of the children and young people either completely or mostly.

### The EHC Needs Assessment Process and Annual Reviews

- In 2025, 70% of children and young people had received support either fully or partially before they had their EHCP (65% in 2023). 69% of parent carers stated their children and young people had an SEN Support Plan before an EHCP (64% in 2023), whilst 58% of educational setting respondents stated all the pupils in their setting had an SEN support plan prior to an EHCP (61% in 2023).
- 64% of children and young people said someone had talked to them about their plan when it was being written (76% in 2023). 95% of parent carers were asked to contribute to the draft EHCP (88% in 2023), while 66% of educational setting respondents were asked to (64% in 2023).
- In 2025, the proportion of respondents that said annual reviews of EHCPs were taking place included: 51% of children and young people (69% in 2023), 72% of parent carers (74% in 2023) and 94% of educational setting respondents (90% in 2023).

### SEN Support Plans

- In 2025, new questions were added to the parent carer survey on SEN Support Plans, based on feedback from our Parent Carer Forum. 43% of parents/carers whose child/young person had an SEN Support Plan felt the plan 'completely' or 'mostly' reflected the needs of their child/young person, while 45% felt the SEN Support Plans 'partially' reflected their needs and 12% felt the plans did not reflect their needs at all.
- 40% of parents/carers whose child/young person had a SEN Support Plan agreed the provision outlined in the plan will improve outcomes/progress for their child/young person, whilst 29% disagreed.

### TOGETHER and the Local Offer for SEND

More work is needed to re-promote our TOGETHER coproduction principles and Local Offer for SEND as awareness varies between groups:

- In the 2025 survey, 8% of children and young people, 9% of parents/carers, 19% of educational setting respondents, and 60% of SEND Partnership staff respondents were aware of the TOGETHER Principles.
- In 2025, 18% of children and young people, 49% of parents/carers, 81% of educational setting respondents, and 88% of SEND Partnership staff respondents were aware of our Local Offer for SEND website.
- 75% of children and young people, 59% of parents/carers, 90% of educational setting respondents, and 81% of SEND Partnership staff respondents that had used our Local Offer for SEND website to find information were able to find the information they were looking for.

### Parents and carers' final comments

- In the 2025 survey, parents and carers were asked 'what one thing is working well for your child/young person and your family?'. The most frequent response focused on 'support from the setting / teacher / SENCO'.
- Parents and carers were also asked 'what one improvement would make the most difference to your child/young person and your family?'. The most frequent response focused on 'waiting times for assessments / appointments / EHC Plans'

## 10. Monitoring Impact

### How will we know we have succeeded?

The Development Plan sets out the actions we will take to improve services. What is most important is that what we do makes a difference, especially to the experiences and outcomes of our children and young people with SEND, so we will regularly report on impact against the areas for improvement. Progress against actions and impact against our areas for improvement will be rated using the following:

Colour	Action Definition
Grey	Action not started yet, no risk to implementation anticipated
Red	Action not on track
Amber	Action not yet completed, but on track to be completed within timescales
Amber E	Action completed but we need to embed and evidence impact
Green	Action completed and embedded with evidence of impact

Our Development Plan will be a live and responsive plan, so will adapt to incorporate new actions as needed. The format of the Development Plan intentionally mirrors that used for the wider Children's Services Improvement Plan, due to the crossover in individuals and organisations that are involved in delivery and oversight of both plans.

The sources we will use to assess our impact for each area of the plan are outlined in each section. These include:

- Performance indicators and outcomes data
- Single and multi-agency quality assurance and audit activity
- Seeking and listening to feedback on children and young people's experiences, and those of their families
- Listening to practitioners and managers across the partnership
- Recruitment and retention information

Information from these sources will be regularly shared with SEND Partnership governance groups, including the 0-25 SEND and AP Partnership Board and SEND Executive Oversight Panel.

We will also have a detailed independent, external evaluation of the effectiveness of the local area partnership's arrangements for children and young people with SEND through an area SEND inspection conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, which may be carried out at any time during the delivery of this document.

## 11. Governance and Accountability

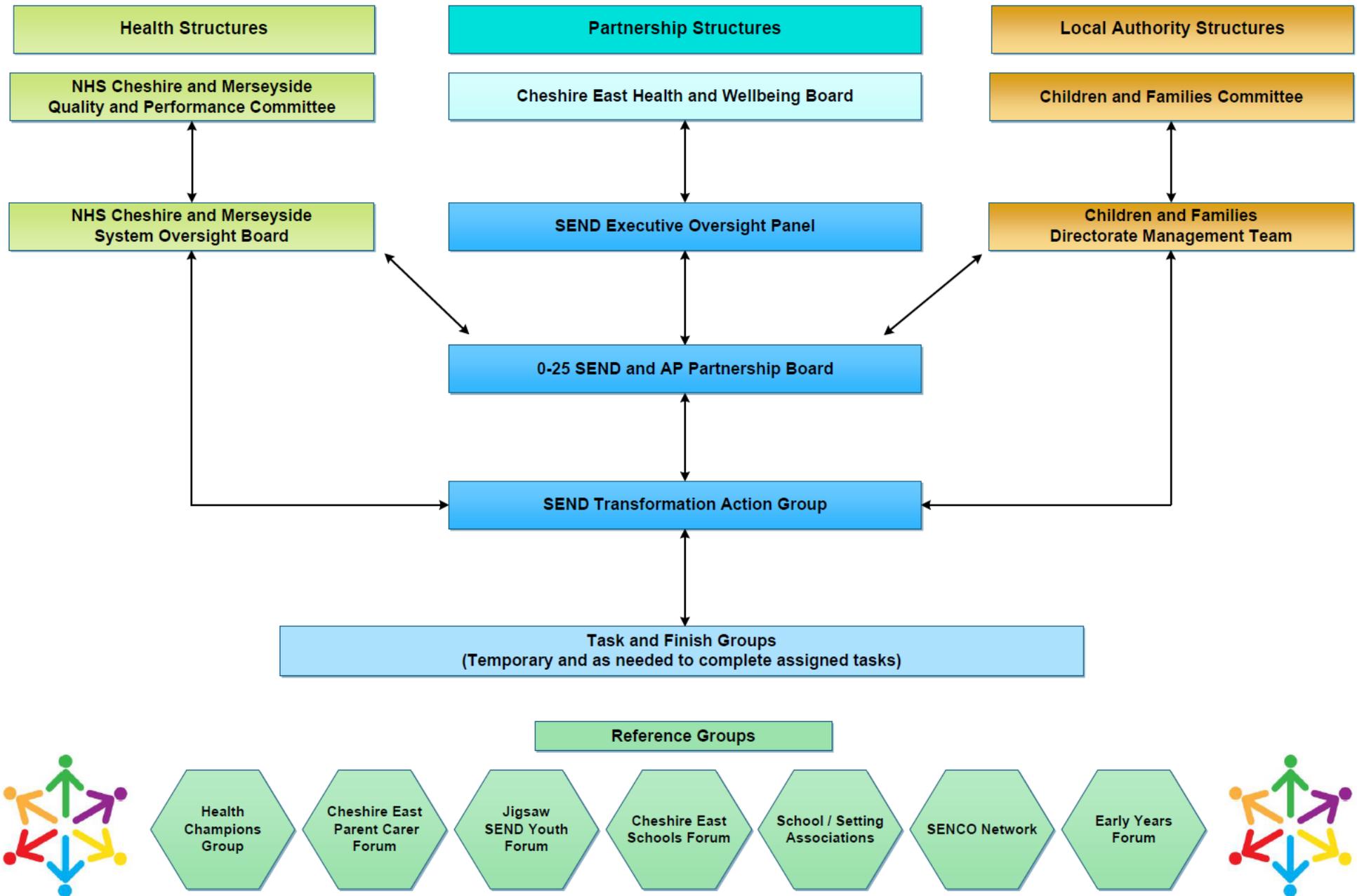
Our required development work is a fundamental change programme that will affect the whole system and will require all partners to work as one.

This ambitious plan cannot be realised without full commitment from all partners at every level: from strategic directors to frontline practitioners within children's and adults' education, health and social care services and settings, and joint working with our children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers. We know that we must do this for financial sustainability, but most importantly because our children and young people deserve to have the right education and support, in the right provision, at the right time, in order to support them to prepare for adulthood and to achieve successful outcomes.

Delivery and oversight of this plan will be driven by the Cheshire East 0-25 SEND Partnership. We have strengthened the partnership's governance to ensure that improvements are completed effectively and at pace, and that there is continual evaluation of the impact of improvements on children and young people's experiences and outcomes, and financial sustainability.

A governance structure for the Cheshire East 0-25 SEND Partnership is shown on the following page.

# Cheshire East 0-25 SEND Partnership Governance



Our 0-25 SEND Partnership governance arrangements will be crucial to ensuring effective delivery and oversight of improvements at pace. Key features of the governance arrangements that enable this are:

- The **SEND Executive Oversight Panel** chaired by the council's Chief Executive. This includes executive directors across education, health and care, along with elected members, and provides executive level leadership and oversight of the progress, outcomes and financial impact of the work carried out by the 0-25 SEND Partnership.
- Membership of the **0-25 SEND and AP Partnership Board** has recently been refreshed and streamlined to ensure key multi-agency partners are represented at a senior level and to reduce duplication of membership at different levels. Members of this board provide senior level guidance, scrutiny, financial monitoring and direction to monitor progress of the SEND and AP Strategy and Development Plan.
- A **SEND Transformation Action Group** (TAG) appoints and assigns actions from our Development Plan to dedicated delivery leads (who then develop Task and Finish Groups for action delivery) and holds delivery leads and their task and finish group accountable for completion of actions in line with agreed timescales.

- Temporary **Task and Finish groups** are each developed by an appointed **delivery lead** and will remain active only as long as is required to complete their assigned development actions. The delivery lead will bring together cross-functional colleagues from across stakeholder groups as required to complete assigned actions. This may include colleagues of various positions from within the local authority, the integrated care board, health providers, educational settings and parent carer forum representatives, and will depend on the specific perspectives, skills and/or experience required to complete the assigned actions. As meetings may involve workshop-style sessions dedicated to specific tasks or actions, membership may not be static and may vary between sessions. Once their assigned actions have been completed, the group will close, and the delivery lead will be assigned new actions by SEND TAG to complete with a new task and finish group.

Regular updates of progress against this plan will be shared for scrutiny and challenge with the Children and Families Committee, the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Health and Care Partnership Board.



## 12. Development Plan – summary of priorities and areas for improvement

Right Support			
SEND Partnership and Senior Leaders' Oversight	Inclusion, SEN Support and our Graduated Approach	Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessments and Plans	Quality Assurance and Audits
<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>Shared partner ownership and oversight of performance (up to senior leader level) to ensure there is a cohesive approach to continuous improvement</p>	<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>The effectiveness and consistency of our local graduated approach and inclusive practice ethos, which includes young people being effectively and appropriately supported to achieve positive outcomes at an SEN support level</p>	<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>The quality and timeliness of Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments and Plans and the strength, consistency and impact of associated decision-making and review processes</p>	<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>The consistency and efficacy of quality assurance activity and audits, and the actions taken in response to learning from these activities, to ensure EHCPs support improving the experiences and outcomes of our children and young people</p>
<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Strengthen SEND and Alternative Provision governance, accountability, reporting and oversight arrangements to ensure scrutiny, challenge and full improvement and performance oversight is provided from partnership leaders at the most senior levels</p> <p>Facilitate delivery of transformational changes to improve the local SEND system for children and young people through an increase in dedicated capacity with appropriate skills and knowledge alongside strengthened joint accountability and delivery arrangements</p> <p>Strengthen stakeholder feedback loops to ensure senior leaders are regularly sighted on the views of young people, parents / carers, educational settings and partnership professionals and this feedback directly informs improvements to local support</p>	<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Increase the number of children and young people supported earlier at an SEN support level and improve their outcomes (including in relation to their education, health and wellbeing) through the use of effective SEN support plans</p> <p>Improve the quality and efficacy of SEN support plans to ensure children and young people are effectively supported to achieve improved outcomes through supporting as early as possible and preventing escalation of need</p> <p>Ensure children and young people receive the right level of support in line with their needs by embedding both inclusive practice in mainstream settings and an effective graduated approach to supporting children and young people with SEND, including further promoting the use and application of the Cheshire East Toolkit for Inclusion and implementing an Inclusion Strategy</p>	<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Improve the process and timeliness of EHC needs assessments and EHCP annual reviews to ensure that children and young people's plans are up to date and meeting their needs</p> <p>Ensure clear, streamlined, robust, consistent and equitable decision-making systems and processes are in place for decisions relating to EHC needs assessments and plans, including specific arrangements for complex cases, to provide accountability across the workforce and a consistent approach that facilitates all children and young people to have access to appropriate provision and levels of support</p> <p>Increase and sustain the timeliness of the 20 week EHC needs assessment process to support timely use of plans and support</p> <p>Strengthen the quality of processes for gathering high quality advice from appropriate professionals and for incorporating this advice into individual EHCPs, along with processes related to outcomes being achieved</p> <p>Improve confidence in the EHC needs assessment process through access to clear guidance and information</p> <p>Improve the process and timeliness of EHCP annual reviews to ensure that children and young people's EHCPs are up to date and continue to include appropriate outcomes and provision to effectively meet their needs and support in achieving their aspirations</p> <p>Revise the EHCP annual review process to ensure it provides a robust system that includes evaluating children and young people's progress whilst also celebrating and evidencing their successes and achievements against their outcomes</p> <p>Deliver and embed training to upskill partnership professionals in delivering effective annual reviews of EHCPs, which result in good quality EHCPs that support children and young people to achieve their outcomes and aspirations</p> <p>Review and refine the guidance for EHCP annual reviews to improve knowledge and confidence in the delivery of effective reviews</p>	<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Improve the consistency and effectiveness of quality assurance activity and audits to ensure that these identify and evidence the extent to which EHCPs support improving the outcomes and experiences of children, young people and their families and that learning is widely shared amongst practitioners to continually improve the quality of EHCPs</p> <p>Further improve the quality of our EHCPs to ensure that they truly reflect the individual needs of the child or young person, their aspirations, the outcomes being sought and the provision required to meet them through strengthened quality assurance arrangements</p>

## Right Support

Commissioning of Pathways and Provision	Data and Information	Funding and Finance	Training
<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>Clear, consistent processes to commission and deliver support equitably across Cheshire East with robust arrangements in place for monitoring and assuring quality of support</p>	<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>Efficiency and accuracy by which information on children and young people is captured, maintained and utilised to inform service delivery</p>	<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>Effectiveness of funding and financial frameworks to ensure children and young people's individual needs are met through the most appropriate provision to support them to achieve positive outcomes within a sustainable system</p>	<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>Clear, consistent, easily accessed training offer across the partnership which is impactful in upskilling professionals and families to effectively support our children and young people with SEND</p>
<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Improve the timeliness of health assessments / waiting lists and the quality and consistency of the health service offer across Cheshire East, particularly for autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) pathways and mental health support</p> <p>Strengthen commissioning oversight arrangements through developing dedicated SEND commissioning resource, reviewing existing contracts and arrangements, refreshing joint commissioning arrangements, revising arrangements to quality assure specialist settings, and better utilisation of clear contract management processes and procedures</p>	<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Improve consistency of data across different providers and remove any data gaps or issues as far as possible to ensure operational and strategic work is informed by accurate data</p> <p>Increase and/or establish clear mechanisms for information sharing across organisations and within partnership governance to evidence priority areas or reasons for recommendations</p> <p>Improve case management systems through agreed changes or implementation of new systems, as appropriate, to ensure they optimally support operational and strategic work</p>	<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Ensure that resources are managed as effectively and efficiently as possible to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children and young people through improved financial oversight, collaboration and commitments across partners and robust decision making processes at appropriate levels</p> <p>Introduce a banding system for the allocation of funding associated with EHCPs across all age ranges and setting types (both mainstream and special) to modernise our system and ensure it is equitable for all children and young people, accurately represents children and young people's needs and is aligned to national plans</p> <p>Provide fair and appropriate funding and support to all children and young people with EHCPs that enables them to be effectively supported to make progress towards their individual outcomes and provides flexibility to schools and settings to facilitate delivery of effective, creative, more inclusive provision of high quality</p> <p>Provide clear information on the role of personal budgets associated with EHCPs, including all associated responsibilities and oversight processes, to ensure they are used appropriately and most effectively</p>	<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Ensure there is a clear and easy to access partnership training offer to upskill stakeholders in effectively identifying and supporting children and young people's needs (including in relation to their education, health and wellbeing) which has documented methods for measuring impact and is informed by feedback and information arising from performance and quality assurance activity</p>

Right Place		Right Time			
Educational Provision and Sufficiency	Alternative Provision (AP) and EOTAS	Transition Between Educational Phases	Attendance	Communication and Learning from Feedback, Complaints and Appeals	Preparing for Adulthood
<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>The sufficiency of suitable educational provision and placements that can meet children and young people's assessed needs</p>	<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>Clarity and effectiveness of decision making and use of alternative provision and educated other than at school (EOTAS) arrangements</p>	<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>Clear and consistent processes and information to facilitate a smooth experience for children and young people with SEND, and their families, when moving between educational phases</p>	<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>Effectiveness of attendance support and monitoring processes and resources to ensure children with SEND are able to access and attend education</p>	<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>Clear, accurate, transparent and timely shared information and responses to learning to improve the experiences and satisfaction of our children and young people, their families and partnership professionals</p>	<p><b>What needs to improve:</b></p> <p>The quality, consistency and timeliness of support, advice, information and guidance given to support children and young people with SEND in achieving good outcomes in adulthood</p>
<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Increase the sufficiency of specialist educational provision in the borough through new schools and increased capacity so that more children can be educated closer to their home and local communities</p> <p>Clarify expectations around the use of specialist provision to ensure it is used appropriately and effectively targeted where it is most required</p> <p>Increase our understanding of our post-16 cohort needs and available provision and pathways, and further develop our post-16 mainstream offer to ensure young people with EHCPs have choice and are able to continue learning in their local community</p>	<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Ensure a strengthened alternative provision offer is in place in Cheshire East that better supports children and young people to make timely progress and reintegration to mainstream education, as appropriate, through a review of existing alternative provision arrangements and delivery of agreed improvements</p> <p>Ensure clear and robust systems are in place to agree, track, monitor and review children and young people in alternative provision or educated other than at school, and to assure the quality of the provision and support they receive, in order to support successful progress towards their individual outcomes and progression into settings, as appropriate</p>	<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Enhance the transition process and establish clear expectations and knowledge regarding transition to ensure that children, young people and families are supported and confident at key transition points (from early years through to adulthood) to reduce escalation of need</p>	<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Increase attendance for children and young people with SEND (including those at SEN Support and with EHCPs)</p> <p>Embed a consistent process to monitor attendance of all children with SEND, including children attending schools / settings outside of Cheshire East</p> <p>Reduce the number of children with EHCPs missing education and ensure all children are able to access a suitable school placement and education acts a protective factor</p>	<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>Improve the experiences and satisfaction of our parent/carers and children and young people and reduce the number of complaints, tribunals and local government ombudsmen (LGO) referrals through improved communication (including evaluating and addressing common communication issues) and providing clarity on expectations</p> <p>Further strengthen our Local Offer for SEND (in conjunction with our Family Hubs Digital Offer) to ensure families and professionals can easily access useful, accurate and relevant information on support available to promote good development and wellbeing in children and young people.</p> <p>Ensure comprehensive awareness raising regarding the presence of our Local Offer for SEND amongst families and professionals, (including those in communities and universal services, as well as those in more SEND specific services).</p>	<p><b>Areas for improvement:</b></p> <p>More seamless and consistent transition for young people when moving between support and services provided for children by the council and partners to the local support and service offer for adults</p> <p>Better joined up working between different colleagues involved in supporting young people in moving between children's and adults' services and support, supported by a new service with clear roles, responsibilities and processes</p> <p>Further expand our Supported Internship offer to enable more choice and opportunities for our young people with SEND around employment options</p> <p>Further strengthen tools, practice guidance and available resources for supporting planning around preparing for adulthood, particularly in relation to careers, employment and independent travel</p> <p>Ensure local authority professionals, educational setting staff and parents / carers are fully informed on the range of post-16 pathways and are able to offer effective support around career planning and outcome setting for children and young people with SEND as they prepare for adulthood</p>

### 13. Development Plan – summary timeline

The below timeline outlines key developments that have already taken place to date in academic year 2024/2025 to improve local SEND support, services and process in line with our DSG Management Plan and previous action plans (in addition to business as usual activity), alongside an outline of what our SEND partnership will achieve by the end of this and future academic years by delivering the actions outlined in our Development Plan.

#### What we have achieved to date in academic year 2024/2025 (April 2025)

1. Refreshed SEND partnership governance structure and membership
2. A distinct SEND Transformation Team to facilitate SEND developments
3. An established shadow SEND Partnership Board for young people with SEND
4. Reprofiled Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan (September 2024)
5. Coproduced training videos for professionals and first annual SEND conference by our young people with SEND for their peers and partnership professionals
6. A strengthened Early Years Forum and appointed Early Years Forum Lead Practitioner to boost links between the forum and parent carers to build trust
7. Targeted Family Hub SEND marketplace sessions and pre-school courses for parents
8. Completed various capital schemes for additional specialist education places, including a 14-place secondary resourced provision (September 2024), a 24-place primary SEN unit (October 2024) and a 20-place primary SEN unit (April 2025)
9. Co-produced short guides for workers and a rolling programme of masterclass training on how to write good social care advice for EHCPs
10. A commenced pilot of PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) planning for a sample of young people to improve preparing for adulthood planning
11. Delivered 'Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools' (PINS) project
12. 2025 SEND Partnership Survey undertaken with young people, parents/carers, educational setting staff and wider partnership professionals
13. A refreshed SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
14. An established single partnership SEND and inclusion training webpage as part of our Local Offer for SEND, plus specific supported internship training resources for employers
15. A dedicated webpage and resources for professionals and parents/carers on transition between educational phases, and 'preparing for your future'/careers events
16. Commenced reviews on local processes and guidance for EHCP Annual Reviews, our specialist outreach offer and EOTAS (Educated Other Than At School)
17. A commenced refresh and pilot of SEN Support paperwork and processes
18. A strengthened Tribunals process with a dedicated officer and training
19. Named Educational Psychologists for educational settings and emotional literacy training
20. Multiple SEND engagement events and meetings, including working TOGETHER sessions for our One Plan, focused sessions at local partnership Boards and RISE inclusion workshops, amongst others
21. A joint recommission of speech and language therapy (SALT) services with a single provider (with new contract scheduled to go live in June 2025)
22. Model options / best practice to support transition between children's and adult services

#### What you will see by the end of academic year 2024/2025 (September 2025)

1. An easy read summary of the SEND and AP 'One Plan'
2. Further strengthened SEND partnership oversight with a revised forward plan, report template and scheduled annual reports
3. An agreed strategic forward plan for 2025/2026 engagement with the Parent Carer Forum
4. Completed results of 2025 SEND Partnership Survey undertaken with young people, parents/carers, educational setting staff and wider partnership professionals
5. A strengthened format for regularly collating and sharing SEND performance information
6. A coproduced, multi-agency Inclusion Strategy to embed a culture of inclusion
7. Reviewed impact of, and agreed next steps for, the Cheshire East Toolkit for Inclusion
8. A proposal and action plan for dissolving 'First Concerns' category
9. Guidance documents and resources for schools to complete effective SEN support plans
10. Completed initial quality assurance audits on current SEN support plans, and an ongoing process to undertake this
11. Reviewed and re-designed local authority-lead SEND decision-making processes, with specific developments to make decision-making more robust regarding high-cost placements (pre and post-16), including a clearly defined complex needs panel and robust forecast planning and review arrangements for complex/high-cost placements
12. Completed data exercises to understand timeliness of ongoing EHC needs assessments and annual reviews for existing EHCPs, with identified actions to prioritise completion of delayed assessments and annual reviews
13. A new quality assurance and audit framework describing quality assurance and audit activity relating to advice for EHC needs assessments, advice for EHC annual reviews and EHC Plans
14. A proposed, co-produced set of banding descriptors and associated bands for EHCPs
15. An updated 0-25 SEND sufficiency statement and provision plan for educational places
16. A policy/resource allocation document on how we will use specialist educational provision
17. Initial alternative provision operational guidance handbook for professionals and schools
18. Revised process flows and guidance for both attendance monitoring and steps in case of children with EHCPs approaching risk of exclusion
19. Memorandum of Understanding between the local authority, ICB and Parent Carer Forum
20. Relunched 'SENDing you the news' e-newsletter and online content with agreed delivery plan for 2025/2026

## What you will see by the end of academic year 2025/2026 (September 2026)

1. Strengthened feedback loop between SEND/AP Partnership Board and shadow board
2. Completed 2025/2026 annual conference for young people with resulting actions
3. Completed 2026 SEND Partnership Survey undertaken with young people, parents/carers, educational setting staff and wider partnership professionals
4. An agreed strategic forward plan for 2026/2027 engagement with the Parent Carer Forum
5. Delivered training to schools on effective use of SEN support plans and pathways available, and a process to embed this training on an ongoing basis
6. Clear delivery options to provide interventions and support to schools/settings around the development of good quality, effective SEN support plans, and a joint risk stratification tool to identify key schools requiring targeted support at an SEN Support level
7. An improved specialist outreach offer, based on feedback, which is targeted appropriately and clearly described on our Local Offer for SEND
8. Completed reviews of Sensory Inclusion / Medical Needs services with recommendations
9. Stakeholder training/materials on local authority-lead SEND decision-making processes
10. Refined information for families and professionals prior to/during EHC needs assessments
11. Completed roll out of parent portal on the children's case management system so parents / carers have 'live' information around current progress and details of their child's EHCP
12. A process to track achievement of education, health and care outcomes in EHCPs
13. An improved EHCP annual review process and template, including improvements around reviewing primary need and incorporating health and social care advice following a review
14. Delivered training and refined guidance on EHCP annual reviews for families and settings
15. A report on 2025 findings, actions and impact from quality assurance and audit activity
16. Refreshed joint commissioning arrangements and strategy
17. Implemented iThrive approach for children and young people's mental health services
18. Clear feasibility of increasing clinical assessments availability in community buildings
19. Completed pilot to test and refine proposed EHCP banding descriptors and bands
20. Improvements to SEND aspects of local authority case management systems
21. Refreshed policy, paperwork and guidance on personal budgets associated with EHCPs
22. Delivered SEND Partnership universal training offer for parents/carers and professionals
23. Further completed, progressed and publicised capital schemes for additional specialist education places in line with our 2025 SEND Sufficiency Statement and Provision Plan, including expansions of existing special schools (via new or expanded satellite sites)
24. A deep dive on cohort and pathways for post-16 young people with EHCPs and gaps
25. Supported smooth placement changes to Cheshire East special schools from independent specialist provision from 2026/2027 where best for individual outcomes
26. An Alternative Provision and Section 19 sufficiency document and initial annual report
27. EOTAS operational guidance and training for local authority staff
28. Targeted work with schools with high levels of children with SEND becoming EHE
29. Further improvements to the Local Offer for SEND based on feedback
30. Careers advice/post-16 pathway training and resources for families and professionals
31. A measurement tool to track progress of our supported interns, plus additional pathways
32. Delivered independent travel training for young people with SEND

## What you will see by the end of academic year 2026/2027 (September 2027)

1. Completed 2026/2027 annual conference for young people with resulting actions
2. Completed 2027 SEND Partnership Survey undertaken with young people, parents/carers, educational setting staff and wider partnership professionals
3. Systems and processes in place to facilitate new banding system being fully operational for all EHCPs going forward
4. Further completed, progressed and publicised capital schemes for additional specialist education places in line with our 2025 SEND Sufficiency Statement and Provision Plan
5. Expanded Cheshire East Supported Internship opportunities with 2 operational models

Note: Further actions will be added to this period and future time periods as our live detailed development plan is delivered and reviewed

## 14. Development Plan – detailed actions

All ratings and updates are accurate as at 14 May 2025.

Where an action specifies a year (e.g. 2025/2026), this relates to the **academic year** unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Where there are different action owners with the same job title, the individual's first initial has been added for clarity.

### Chapter 1 - Right Support

#### 1. SEND Partnership and Senior Leaders' Oversight

What needs to improve				
Shared partner ownership and oversight of performance (up to senior leader level) to ensure there is a cohesive approach to continuous improvement				
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen SEND and Alternative Provision governance, accountability, reporting and oversight arrangements to ensure scrutiny, challenge and full improvement and performance oversight is provided from partnership leaders at the most senior levels</li> <li>Facilitate delivery of transformational changes to improve the local SEND system for children and young people through an increase in dedicated capacity with appropriate skills and knowledge alongside strengthened joint accountability and delivery arrangements</li> <li>Strengthen stakeholder feedback loops to ensure senior leaders are regularly sighted on the views of young people, parents / carers, educational settings and partnership professionals and this feedback directly informs improvements to local support</li> </ul>			
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
SP1	Create and publish an easy read summary of the SEND and AP 'One Plan'	Business Development Manager (V)	September 2025	On track
SP2	Develop a SEND Transformation Team to work alongside senior directors with capacity to drive the SEND and AP transformation change programme in line with the SEND and AP 'One Plan' and ensure change is delivered to time, quality and cost standards	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND	December 2024	Complete
SP3	Strengthen information shared within SEND partnership governance to support its decision-making, scrutiny and oversight of 'One Plan' delivery through a revised forward plan, a report template and production of annual reports reviewing the impact and improvement areas	Business Development Manager (V)	September 2025	On track
SP4a	Undertake the 2026 annual review and refresh of our SEND and AP self-evaluation, in line with Ofsted annual engagement meeting, and share with SEND and AP Partnership Board for scrutiny / challenge	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND	March 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

SP4b	Undertake the 2027 annual review and refresh of our SEND and AP self-evaluation, in line with Ofsted annual engagement meeting, and share with SEND and AP Partnership Board for scrutiny / challenge	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND	March 2027	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
SP5	Create a clear, strengthened feedback loop between the SEND and AP Partnership Board and the shadow SEND board for children and young people to enhance our strategic work with young people	Participation Lead SEND Project Assistant	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
SP6a	Coproduce a 2025/2026 annual conference for children and young people so that senior leaders across the partnership can hear their experiences face to face and listen to their views on what needs to change	Participation Lead	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
SP6b	Coproduce a 2026/2027 annual conference for children and young people so that senior leaders across the partnership can hear their experiences face to face and listen to their views on what needs to change	Participation Lead	December 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
SP7a	Coproduce a 2025/2026 strategic forward plan for engagement with the Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum to establish agreed priorities and timescales for input from parents and carers	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND PCF Chair / Vice-Chair	September 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
SP7b	Coproduce a 2026/2027 strategic forward plan for engagement with the Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum to establish agreed priorities and timescales for input from parents and carers	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND PCF Chair / Vice-Chair	September 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
SP8	Sign off and publish the updated SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	Consultant in Public Health	June 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact
SP9a	Create and publish the 2025 annual survey for parent/carers, children and young people, schools and settings and other key partners and ensure findings are shared and inform developments across the partnership	SEND Project Assistant	June 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact
SP9b	Create and publish the 2026 annual survey for parent/carers, children and young people, schools and settings and other key partners and ensure findings are shared and inform developments across the partnership	SEND Project Assistant	June 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
SP9c	Create and publish the 2027 annual survey for parent/carers, children and young people, schools and settings and other key partners and ensure findings are shared and inform developments across the partnership	SEND Project Assistant	June 2027	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

SL10	Review, refresh and strengthen the format for regularly collating and sharing SEND performance information at all required governance levels	Business Development Officer (J)	June 2025	Delayed
<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<p>The pace and impact of changes will be evaluated through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bi-monthly updates to, and reports against, the development plan</li> <li>• monthly performance indicators in the SEND scorecards</li> <li>• total spend – actual expenditure v forecast / budget</li> <li>• feedback from children and young people from our shadow SEND partnership board, participation groups, annual conference and surveys</li> <li>• feedback from parents and carers via the Parent Carer Forum and surveys</li> <li>• identified themes, findings, learning and actions from single-agency and multi-agency quality assurance activity</li> <li>• outcomes of Ofsted and CQC inspection, Ofsted annual engagement meetings and peer reviews, which will demonstrate whether our understanding of developments are accurate</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the experiences and outcomes of our children and young with SEND and areas for development</li> <li>• Forecasted overall cost avoidance targets achieved (year on year) in line with our Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan</li> <li>• Quality assurance activity drives improvements to the quality of practice, resulting in improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND</li> <li>• More positive feedback from children and young people with SEND, and their parents and carers, in the annual conference and SEND partnership surveys compared with previous years</li> </ul>	
<b>Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people</b>				
<p>A SEND Transformation Team is in place, overseen by the Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND.</p> <p>A strengthened forward plan for SEND Partnership meetings is in development and a report template has been drafted, in line with feedback from our Department for Education Advisor.</p> <p>A refreshed SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is currently being finalised following extensive analysis and engagement with a wide variety of colleagues and stakeholders across the SEND Partnership. This document was shared with the SEND and AP Partnership Board in April 2025 and will be signed off through JSNA governance shortly, with the final version to then be published on the council's website.</p> <p>The 2025 annual SEND Partnership surveys for parent/carers, children/young people, schools/settings and partnership professionals were open for submissions between 12 February - 9 March 2025, with a total of 652 responses received across all 4 surveys (compared to 474 responses to the last surveys in 2023). Work to analyse the results and finalise a collated report on the findings is continuing, in line with action timescales (SP9a).</p> <p>Work to produce a strengthened format for regularly collating and sharing SEND performance information is ongoing, but has experienced delays due to capacity and the need to align multiple differing reporting requirements and requests (both operational and strategic, and for various reporting forums).</p>				

## 2. Inclusion, SEN Support and our Graduated Approach

What needs to improve				
The effectiveness and consistency of our local graduated approach and inclusive practice ethos, which includes young people being effectively and appropriately supported to achieve positive outcomes at an SEN support level				
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of children and young people supported earlier at an SEN support level and improve their outcomes (including in relation to their education, health and wellbeing) through the use of effective SEN support plans</li> <li>• Improve the quality and efficacy of SEN support plans to ensure children and young people are effectively supported to achieve improved outcomes through supporting as early as possible and preventing escalation of need</li> <li>• Ensure children and young people receive the right level of support in line with their needs by embedding both inclusive practice in mainstream settings and an effective graduated approach to supporting children and young people with SEND, including further promoting the use and application of the Cheshire East Toolkit for Inclusion and implementing an Inclusion Strategy</li> <li>• Review services to identify how we can maximise their impact in a strengthened and more connected offer to support children and young people to achieve improved outcomes</li> </ul>			
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
SS1	Develop and launch a coproduced, multi-agency Inclusion Strategy to embed a culture of inclusion across the whole of Cheshire East through sharing good practice and creating a coherent education system, thereby enabling every child and young person to access the provision they need	Primary Inclusion Co-ordinator	September 2025	On track
SS2	Review impact of, and feedback on, the Cheshire East Toolkit for Inclusion and agree next development steps for this document	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND	July 2025	On track
SS3	Prepare proposal and action plan for dissolving 'First Concerns' category and process for moving existing children and young people at this level across all CE settings, in order to remove potential sources of confusion or barriers to support arrangements	Inclusion Quality Officer (K)	July 2025	On track
SS4	Provide guidance documents and resources for schools to use to complete effective SEN support plans (in addition to the Toolkit for Inclusion, e.g. one-minute guides)	Inclusion Quality Officer (K)	September 2025	On track
SS5	Undertake initial quality assurance audits on current SEN support plans, and agree and document an ongoing process to undertake quality assurance on SEN support plans	Inclusion Quality Officer (K)	September 2025	On track
SS6	Plan, organise and deliver training to schools to inform and educate them on the effective use of SEN support plans and the pathways available, and develop a process to embed this training into the partnership training plan on an ongoing basis	Inclusion Quality Officer (K)	December 2025	On track

SS7	Develop and implement a training programme across the partnership (including parents/carers, initial teacher training and new staff across schools/settings/local authority and partner professionals) to increase understanding of the graduated approach and embed ongoing application of the Cheshire East Toolkit for Inclusion, and develop a process to embed this training into the partnership training plan on an ongoing basis	Inclusion Quality Officer (A)	March 2025	Complete
SS8	Review capacity and delivery options to provide interventions and support to schools / settings around the development of good quality, effective SEN support plans (particularly where a decision has been made not to assess or issue an EHCP)	Inclusion Quality Officer (K) Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND	December 2025	On track
SS9	Agree joint risk stratification tool to identify key schools requiring targeted support at an SEN Support level	Inclusion Quality Officer (K)	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
SS10	Review the impact of the specialist outreach programme pilot and prepare recommendations to improve the specialist outreach offer	Inclusion Quality Officer (A)	April 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact
SS11	Implement agreed recommendations to improve specialist outreach offer based on pilot impact review, feedback and suggested improvements	Inclusion Quality Officer (A)	September 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
SS12	Use data effectively and link with panel decision making processes to target support of the specialist outreach programme	Inclusion Quality Officer (A)	September 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
SS13	Upload details of improved specialist outreach offer onto Cheshire East Local Offer for SEND to facilitate schools to access as part of the graduated approach	Inclusion Quality Officer (A)	September 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
SS14	Review how in-house Sensory Inclusion services could be delivered differently to support both children/young people and schools/settings across different provision types in order to achieve value for money through improved outcomes and efficiency savings	Principal Educational Psychologist	September 2025	On track
SS15	Review how in-house Medical Needs services could be delivered differently to support both children/young people and schools/settings across different provision types in order to achieve value for money through improved outcomes and efficiency savings	Interim Head of Service: Education Participation and Pupil Support	September 2025	On track
<b>How we'll assess if we've</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number / percentage of Cheshire East children and young people supported at an SEN support level</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased number / percentage of Cheshire East children and young people supported at an SEN support level compared with previous years</li> </ul>	

<p><b>addressed this area</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The educational outcomes of Cheshire East children and young people supported at an SEN support level</li> <li>• Total numbers of requests for EHC needs assessments</li> <li>• Total number of EHCPs and number of new EHCPs issued</li> <li>• Numbers / percentages of requests for, and agreements of, change of placements (specifying if change of placement type and direction of change)</li> <li>• Number / percentage of children and young people with EHCPs in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mainstream provision</li> <li>- a specialist placement (including RP / SEN unit or special school)</li> <li>- non-maintained special school, independent special school or specialist post-16 institute</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Findings from quality assurance activity on SEN support plans</li> <li>• Feedback on SEN Support from parents and carers via the annual SEND partnership surveys</li> <li>• Feedback from professionals in educational settings on SEN Support guidance and resources from training sessions</li> </ul>	<p><b>addressed this area</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality assurance activity drives improvements to the quality of practice, resulting in improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND</li> <li>• More positive educational outcomes of Cheshire East children and young people supported at an SEN support level compared with previous years, and a reduced attainment gap with peers</li> <li>• Increased parent carer confidence in support for children and young people at the SEN Support level, as demonstrated by more positive feedback on SEN Support from parents and carers in the SEND partnership surveys compared with previous years</li> <li>• Children and young people's needs are routinely identified and appropriately supported at the earliest opportunity, leading to a reduction in the number of / percentages of requests for EHC needs assessments, first EHCPs issued, and change or placement requests, compared with previous years</li> <li>• Children and young people are being appropriately supported in the right setting in line with their needs</li> <li>• Forecasted overall cost avoidance targets achieved (year on year) in line with our Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan</li> </ul>
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**Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people**

Council colleagues have been working closely with colleagues from the Research and Improvement for SEND Excellence (RISE) partnership led by the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) to deliver three sessions with various partners looking at improving inclusion in schools in Cheshire East. RISE colleagues also undertook a desktop review of our Cheshire East Toolkit for Inclusion. The rich information from these sessions and review has been collated and shared by RISE colleagues and will now be used to inform development of our Inclusion Strategy (SS1) and next steps for our Toolkit for Inclusion (SS2).

A Delivery Lead (Primary Inclusion Co-ordinator) has been identified to lead on the development of the Cheshire East Inclusion strategy, building on the work undertaken with RISE colleagues. The Primary Inclusion Co-ordinator will be joining the council from 2 June 2025, but has already commenced work on the strategy ahead of a working TOGETHER session on the strategy on 11 June 2025.

The Delivery Lead for SEN Support and the graduated approach actions (Inclusion Quality Officer – K) has gathered feedback from stakeholders on current SEN Support paperwork (through various meetings and a SENCO survey) and has also, alongside colleagues, reviewed a number of existing SEN Support Plans. The Delivery Lead has used the feedback and learning from both exercises to design a new proposed SEN Support and Inclusion Proforma, which has recently been piloted with a number of settings. The Delivery Lead is now using feedback from the pilot to further refine the proforma, alongside developing further accompanying guidance, paperwork and a proposal to dissolve the ‘first concerns’ category (following feedback on potential confusion and barriers arising from this).

The Specialist Outreach Service pilot created and facilitated by Cheshire East Specialist Provisions started in December 2023, and offered advice, guidance, training, support and observation to schools. The Delivery Lead for specialist outreach actions (Inclusion Quality Officer – A) has undertaken a review of this previous pilot offer, including analysing information on referrals, use of the service and feedback from various professionals. A report covering findings and suggested recommendations has been shared with the SEND Transformation Action Group (TAG), with some recommendations agreed and further clarity / scoping work required on others, including a costed options analysis.

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### 3. Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessments and Plans

#### What needs to improve

The quality and timeliness of Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments and Plans and the strength, consistency and impact of associated decision-making and review processes

#### A. Decision making and panel processes

<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the process and timeliness of EHC needs assessments and EHCP annual reviews to ensure that children and young people's plans are up to date and meeting their needs</li> <li>• Ensure clear, streamlined, robust, consistent and equitable decision-making systems and processes are in place for decisions relating to EHC needs assessments and plans, including specific arrangements for complex cases, to provide accountability across the workforce and a consistent approach that facilitates all children and young people to have access to appropriate provision and levels of support</li> </ul>
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Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
EHC-A1	Create a process to regularly monitor, review and evaluate the efficacy and impact of the early years forum and associated portage service, with an initial annual report of results and any recommended improvements shared with the SEND and AP Partnership Board	Head of Service: Early Years	September 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EHC-A2	Review and re-design local authority-lead SEND decision-making processes across all panels and forums from early years to post-16 (taking learning from other areas on models of decision making) to ensure processes are robust, streamlined, efficient, multi-agency and linked to the graduated approach	Head of Service: Inclusion	September 2025	On track
EHC-A3	Undertake specific development of the SEND decision-making and panel processes to make decision-making more robust regarding high-cost placements (pre and post-16), with clear links to the new complex cases panel	Head of Service: Inclusion	September 2025	On track
EHC-A4	Create a complex cases panel, with clear terms of reference and linked to adult social care, to agree and review decisions relating to new and existing cases defined as complex	Children and Families Health Consultant	September 2025	On track
EHC-A5	Introduce a forecast planning process for the most complex of cases who are likely to move through to adult social care <i>[linking with actions in section 14.A. Birth to Thrive]</i>	Head of Service: Inclusion	September 2025	Delayed
EHC-A6	Agree and implement arrangements to regularly review high-cost placements (including existing placements and new placements arising from agreed change of placement requests)	Head of Service: Inclusion	September 2025	Delayed

EHC-A7	Prepare and deliver training sessions and materials on the new local authority-lead SEND decision-making processes for key stakeholders	Head of Service: Inclusion	October 2025	On track
<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total number of EHCPs and number of new EHCPs issued and percentage growth increase of EHCPs compared to mitigated forecast</li> <li>Number / percentage of EHC needs assessment requests resulting in agree to assess and agree to issue an EHCP (and any 'overturned' decisions)</li> <li>Numbers / percentages of requests for, and agreements of, change of placements (specifying if change of placement type and direction of change)</li> <li>Number / percentage of EHCPs ceased – particularly where outcomes achieved</li> <li>Average cost of top-up funding (overall and in different setting types)</li> <li>Number / percentage of children and young people with EHCPs in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mainstream provision</li> <li>a specialist placement (including RP / SEN unit or special school)</li> <li>non-maintained special school, independent special school or specialist post-16 institute</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased strength of, and confidence in, decision making from all groups, as demonstrated by a reduction in the number of 'overturned' decisions, complaints, mediations and appeals compared with previous years</li> <li>Children and young people's needs are routinely identified and appropriately supported at the earliest opportunity, leading to a reduction in the number of / percentages of requests for EHC needs assessments, first EHCPs issued, and change or placement requests, compared with previous years</li> <li>Children and young people are being appropriately supported in the right setting in line with their needs</li> <li>Forecasted overall cost avoidance targets achieved (year on year) in line with our Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan</li> </ul>	
<b>Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people</b>				
<p>The Early Years Forum was strengthened in September 2023. The role of the forum is to support effective early intervention for children with SEND in line with the SEND Code of Practice and graduated approach. The multi-agency partnership supports the early provision of interventions at SEN support level and monitors the impact on children's outcomes. When the Early Years Forum started in 2023 the agenda was initially new referrals which meant very few children were recommended for EHC needs assessment as the forum were recommending interventions and supporting settings with the quality of SEN support plans and then monitoring the impact on children's outcomes. Children were then scheduled for reviews at which the forum makes recommendations based on the impact of the graduated approach support in terms of how successful it has been in helping the child to make progress. For some children their progress is rapid, and it is clear their development gap is narrowing - in this case, SEN support continues and transition to school is planned. Where children make progress but it is clear the gap between peers is not closing or is widening, the Early Years Forum will recommend an EHC needs assessment request.</p> <p>As the forum has entered its second year, the reviews and EHC needs assessment requests have increased as children are coming back for review with robust evidence to demonstrate they need more help to achieve their outcomes than a SEN support plan can provide. Whilst the numbers have risen, we are confident that the children referred by the Early Years Forum require a EHCP to support need. We have seen a slight rise in parental requests. With the majority of families known to forum, parents are happy with the forum recommendations. However some parents have taken their own actions independently, or on advice of educational settings, to progress with EHC needs assessments requests in advance of the early years forum.</p>				

An initial review of the SEND decision making panels has taken place and improvements have been implemented. A further review and evaluation of panels will take place over the summer to identify further improvements/adjustments to the process, and to ensure decision-making is streamlined as far as possible. Clear definitions and terms of reference for each of the panels need to be defined and communicated across the partnership.

In recent months we have seen an increase in EHC needs assessment requests in relation to children and young people experiencing concerns around mental health and anxiety; within the applications we have seen an increased number with concerns in regards of barriers to accessing school full time and in some instance unable to attend school at all. Many of these children and young people do not yet have any diagnosis but are on Autism or ADHD pathways following referrals being undertaken. As a response to this we are currently looking to work with colleagues across the partnership, including health, to review the needs and themes to look at how we can support our children, families and schools/settings moving forwards.

There is a risk relating to actions linked to Birth to Thrive actions (as described in [section 14.A](#)) in that capacity to project manage and drive work still needs to be identified for the Birth to Thrive project going forward, following initial work undertaken by Inner Circle project capacity (which ceased in March 2025).

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## B. Needs assessment process

<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase and sustain the timeliness of the 20 week EHC needs assessment process to support timely use of plans and support</li> <li>• Strengthen the quality of processes for gathering high quality advice from appropriate professionals and for incorporating this advice into individual EHCPs, along with processes related to outcomes being achieved</li> <li>• Improve confidence in the EHC needs assessment process through access to clear guidance and information</li> </ul>
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Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
EHC-B1	Undertake a data exercise to understand timeliness of ongoing EHC needs assessments and identify a process / required actions to prioritise completion of any delayed assessments	Head of Service: Inclusion	July 2025	On track
EHC-B2	Revise the educational psychology template, so that quality first teaching and ordinarily available inclusive provision is not recorded as 'over and above' provision within an EHCP	Principal Educational Psychologist	December 2024	Complete
EHC-B3	Agree a process to improve care advice for children and young people undergoing an EHC needs assessment or EHCP annual review who don't have any involvement from early help, children's and adult social care	Designated Social Care Officer	April 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact
EHC-B4	Review and refine information shared with families and professionals prior to and during the EHC needs assessment process including any guidance, signposting resources, flowcharts, process maps and specific related information on our Local Offer for SEND	Business Development Manager (V)	December 2025	On track
EHC-B5	Building on the previous pilot, complete the roll out of the parent portal on the children's case management system so that parents / carers can have direct access and 'live' information around current progress and details relating to their child's EHCP	Head of Service: Inclusion Liquid Logic Support Officer / ICT Project Manager	July 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EHC-B6	Undertake a review of the process to cease an EHCP and prepare recommended actions to improve the process and to ensure that professionals, young people and their families are aware of other available support (including adult social care options)	Area Delivery Manager – NEET and PFA	December 2025	On track
EHC-B7	Develop a process to measure and track achievement of education, health and wellbeing, and care outcomes as described in EHCPs	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND	March 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

<p><b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeliness of EHC needs assessments, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Percentage of decisions whether to assess made within 6 weeks</li> <li>- Number / percentage of EHC needs assessments (with final EHC Plan issued) completed within 20 weeks (and number / percentage of those overdue at any time and of these, average / longest assessments)</li> <li>- Average number of weeks taken for EHC Plans to be issued</li> <li>- Percentage of advice submitted for EHC needs assessment process within 6 weeks</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Feedback on EHC needs assessment process and plans from young people, parents and carers and educational settings via SEND surveys</li> <li>• Number and themes of SEND-related compliments and complaints received by the local authority, ICB and health trusts</li> <li>• Number and themes of mediations and appeals registered with the First-tier Tribunal</li> </ul>	<p><b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in percentage of EHC needs assessments completed within 20 weeks to as close to 100% as possible (and no less than 85%)</li> <li>• Reduction in average number of weeks taken for EHC plans to be issued to as close to 20 weeks as possible (and no more than 23 weeks)</li> <li>• Improvements result in consistently good quality practice - over 80% of EHCPs will be graded as good or better quality through quality assurance activity</li> <li>• Increased confidence and satisfaction in timeliness and quality of EHC needs assessment process and EHCPs from all groups, as demonstrated by more positive feedback in the SEND partnership surveys and a reduction in the number of received complaints, mediations and appeals registered with the First-tier Tribunal compared with previous years</li> </ul>
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**Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people**

The Educational Psychologist advice template has been revised, and we are now working on ensuring it is consistently embedded across the service (EHC-B2).

The Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) has undertaken training with SEND team colleagues on steps to take around care advice for children and young people undergoing an EHC needs assessment or EHCP annual review who don't have any involvement from early help, children and adult social care (EHC-B3).

As an initial step for reviewing and refining information shared with families and professionals prior to and during the EHC needs assessment process (EHC-B4), the Business Development Manager has located work that was previously coproduced by professionals and parents/carers; work will now be undertaken to assess which parts of this information are still relevant and/or where updates are required.

## C. Annual Reviews

### Areas for improvement

- Improve the process and timeliness of EHCP annual reviews to ensure that children and young people's EHCPs are up to date and continue to include appropriate outcomes and provision to effectively meet their needs and support in achieving their aspirations
- Revise the EHCP annual review process to ensure it provides a robust system that includes evaluating children and young people's progress whilst also celebrating and evidencing their successes and achievements against their outcomes
- Deliver and embed training to upskill partnership professionals in delivering effective annual reviews of EHCPs, which result in good quality EHCPs that support children and young people to achieve their outcomes and aspirations
- Review and refine the guidance for EHCP annual reviews to improve knowledge and confidence in the delivery of effective reviews

Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
EHC-C1	Undertake a data exercise to understand timeliness of annual reviews for all existing EHCPs and identify a process / required actions to prioritise completion of any delayed annual reviews	Head of Service: Inclusion	July 2025	On track
EHC-C2	Undertake a full review of the current process and template (on Liquidlogic) for EHCP annual reviews, and prepare recommendations to improve the annual review process and template	Inclusion Quality Officer (D)	April 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact
EHC-C3	Implement agreed actions to improve the annual review process and template (on Liquidlogic) resulting from the process and template review	Inclusion Quality Officer (D)	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EHC-C4	Agree and implement actions (i.e. process changes and/or training etc.) to improve efficacy and consistency of incorporating updates from health advice into EHCPs during annual reviews	Designated Clinical Officer	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EHC-C5	Agree and implement actions (i.e. process changes and/or training etc.) to improve efficacy and consistency of incorporating updates from social care advice into EHCPs during annual reviews	Designated Social Care Officer	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EHC-C6	Develop a process within EHCP annual reviews whereby primary need is reviewed and updated to reflect the child or young person's current needs <i>[links with action D18]</i>	Inclusion Quality Officer (D)	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EHC-C7	Develop a process and/or supportive resources to ensure Preparing for Adulthood is embedded as a clear focus in EHCP Annual Reviews from (at least) year 9 onwards	Inclusion Quality Officer (D)	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

EHC-C8	Provide an initial round of training on effective annual reviews (including evidencing completed outcomes and writing good quality, clear outcomes) to SEND staff within the local authority and schools/settings, and then agree a process to regularly deliver this training on an ongoing basis as part of a rolling programme	Inclusion Quality Officer (D)	January 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EHC-C9	Utilising best practice examples, develop and co-produce refined guidance for parents, children/young people and schools/settings on what to expect and how to maximise effectiveness of annual reviews	Inclusion Quality Officer (D)	January 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeliness of EHCP annual reviews, including number / percentage completed within required timescales (and number / percentage of those overdue at any time and of these, average / longest time overdue)</li> <li>• Number / percentage of children and young people with EHCPs with each need type as their primary need</li> <li>• Feedback on EHCP annual reviews from young people, parents and carers and educational settings via SEND surveys</li> <li>• Number and themes of SEND-related compliments and complaints received by the local authority, ICB and health trusts</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in percentage of EHCP annual reviews completed within required timescales</li> <li>• Increased confidence and satisfaction in timeliness and quality of EHCP annual reviews, as demonstrated by more positive feedback from young people with SEND, their parents and carers, and educational setting staff in SEND partnership surveys, and a reduction in the number of complaints, compared with previous years</li> </ul>	
<b>Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people</b>				
<p>The Delivery Lead for EHCP annual reviews (Inclusion Quality Officer – D) collated a review report on EHCP annual reviews, informed by a range of sources including surveys, stakeholder feedback, data analysis, research and case studies. This report was shared with SEND Transformation Action Group (TAG) and discussed in a dedicated meeting on 25 March 2025, where members discussed queries and provided feedback on the report and its recommendations; some recommendations were agreed, along with the need for further work on a proposed local approach and operational guidance on EHCP annual reviews, which will inform decisions on some of the remaining recommendations.</p>				

## 4. Quality Assurance and Audits

What needs to improve				
The consistency and efficacy of quality assurance activity and audits, and the actions taken in response to learning from these activities, to ensure EHCPs support improving the experiences and outcomes of our children and young people				
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the consistency and effectiveness of quality assurance activity and audits to ensure that these identify and evidence the extent to which EHCPs support improving the outcomes and experiences of children, young people and their families and that learning is widely shared amongst practitioners to continually improve the quality of EHCPs</li> <li>• Further improve the quality of our EHCPs to ensure that they truly reflect the individual needs of the child or young person, their aspirations, the outcomes being sought and the provision required to meet them through strengthened quality assurance arrangements</li> </ul>			
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
QA1	Prepare a new quality assurance and audit framework, including an audit tool template and covering both single agency and multi-agency activities, for advice for EHC needs assessments, advice for EHCP annual reviews and EHC Plans	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND Head of Service: Inclusion	July 2025	On track
QA2	Deliver training for any partnership colleagues involved in delivery of the new quality assurance and audit framework for advice for EHC needs assessments, advice for EHCP annual reviews and EHC Plans	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND Head of Service: Inclusion	October 2025	On track
QA3	Deliver specific training for any partnership colleagues involved in delivery of the new multi-agency audit activity on EHC Plan in line with the new framework	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND Head of Service: Inclusion	October 2025	On track
QA4	Implement the robust feedback loop to share findings from quality assurance and audit activity relating to advice for EHC needs assessments, advice for EHC annual reviews and EHC Plans in line with the framework	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND Head of Service: Inclusion	October 2025	On track
QA5	Devise and agree a process to systematically improve the quality of existing EHC Plans for children and young people across all stages of education to ensure they reflect their aspirations, the successes that have been achieved, the provision identified continues to be appropriate, aligns with need, and is supporting them to make progress towards their outcomes	Head of Service: Inclusion	September 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

QA6	Prepare an initial annual report outlining 2025 findings from quality assurance and audit activity, along with action taken as a result of findings and impact assessment for sharing with SEND and AP Partnership Board	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND Head of Service: Inclusion	March 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of EHCPs sampled for single-agency, and multi-agency, quality assurance activity</li> <li>• Percentage of sampled EHCPs graded as good or better (and percentage of downgrades following management oversight)</li> <li>• Identified themes, findings, learning and actions from single-agency and multi-agency quality assurance activity</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements result in consistently good quality practice - over 80% of EHCPs will be graded as good or better quality through quality assurance activity</li> </ul>	
<b>Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people</b>				
<p>A new quality assurance and audit framework was drafted and shared with the SEND Transformation Action Group (TAG) on 13 March 2025 for feedback from members, with detailed feedback shared with the document leads. The draft document was also shared with SEND and AP Partnership Board members as part of the papers for the scheduled board meeting on 21 March, but this meeting unfortunately did not take place due to quoracy issues and was rescheduled for 25 April 2025. Work has continued on reviewing the feedback received to date and in revising the framework based on this.</p>				

## 5. Commissioning of pathways and provision

What needs to improve				
Clear, consistent processes to commission and deliver support equitably across Cheshire East with robust arrangements in place for monitoring and assuring quality of support				
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the timeliness of health assessments / waiting lists and the quality and consistency of the health service offer across Cheshire East, particularly for autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) pathways and mental health support</li> <li>• Strengthen commissioning oversight arrangements through developing dedicated SEND commissioning resource, reviewing existing contracts and arrangements, refreshing joint commissioning arrangements, revising arrangements to quality assure specialist settings, and better utilisation of clear contract management processes and procedures</li> </ul>			
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
C1	Undertake a review to understand and identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any issues with existing SEND-related commissioning contracts and</li> <li>• effectiveness of current commissioning arrangements for SEND</li> </ul> And use results to make recommendations for future improvements	Interim Project Lead for Children's Commissioning	September 2025	On track
C2	Develop and establish dedicated SEND commissioning resource to oversee and manage all SEND-related commissioning and quality assurance arrangements	Director of Improvement Director of Commissioning, Quality Assurance and Partnerships	December 2025	On track
C3	Develop and have in place service level agreements (SLAs) or defined contract arrangements (as applicable depending on service) for managing all SEND-related contracts within local authority children's services (including service contract arrangements, SLAs for Cheshire East Resource Provisions / SEN Units / schools and individual pupil agreements), and ensure these are outcome-based and include clear expectations and contract management arrangements (e.g. annual reviews, attendance monitoring etc.)	Head of Integrated Commissioning	April 2026	On track
C4	Clarify, document and share information on decision making processes and support to manage fee challenges and requests for fee increases / uplifts for specialist independent and non-maintained provision (through internal guidance and inclusion in external contract templates)	Head of Integrated Commissioning	September 2025	On track

C5	Review the current quality assurance (QA) process for all specialist provision where Cheshire East pupils are placed (including maintained, independent and non-maintained special schools and Cheshire East Resource Provisions and SEND Units) and strengthen quality assurance arrangements, frameworks, tools and processes to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of specialist provision, including drawing up a schedule of work for quality assurance visits with schools to measure the impact of placements and the progress young people are making in these settings	Interim Project Lead for Children's Commissioning	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
C6	Refresh joint commissioning arrangements (including review and refresh of joint commissioning strategy) to enable partners to make best use of resources to improve outcomes for children and young people	Head of Integrated Commissioning	April 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
C7	Design, secure investment for and implement adult ADHD model (applicable for 16 – 25 year olds) to respond to referrals more effectively [Action dependent upon approval of investment]	Head of Integrated Commissioning	March 2026	On track
C8	Implement paediatric Autism and ADHD assessment pathway, in line with regional Cheshire and Merseyside recovery programme and ensuring unwarranted variation (North/South) issues are addressed	Head of Integrated Commissioning	March 2026	On track
C9	Produce suite of resources for families who are looking for proactive support, advice and guidance from appropriate specialists, including those waiting for clinical Autism and ADHD assessments. Ensure an appropriate level of support is available following the assessment process, whether or not a diagnosis is given. Develop impact measures (including qualitative and quantitative data) to track reduction in waiting times and where information has helped provide better support and understanding of neurodiversity etc.	Head of Integrated Commissioning	June 2025 (Impact data will not be available until December 2025)	On track
C10	Extend mental health Intensive Support Function (ISF) to age 25, including development and implementation of a new service specification and agreeing arrangements for increased monitoring	Central ICB coordination, supported by Head of Operations - CWP	December 2025	On track
C11	Clarify the 0-5 mental health pathway offer to align with Wirral Place [Action dependent upon approval of investment]	Head of Operations - CWP	December 2025	On track
C12	Continue to implement iThrive approach across Cheshire East to improve mental health and wellbeing outcomes for the children and young people of Cheshire East	Trauma and Mental Health Practitioner and Wellbeing for Education Co-ordinator	March 2026	On track
C13	Further develop, clarify and document the multi-agency arrangements for ensuring children and young people receive equipment and home adaptations and consumables when needed	Head of Integrated Commissioning	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

C14	Continue to increase uptake to the holiday activities programme from SEND children and young people and extend the range of provision accessible to them	Business Development Manager (D)	September 2025	On track
C15	Building on pilot at Monks Coppenhall Family Hub, investigate feasibility of options to increase availability of clinical assessments in community buildings (e.g. family hubs)	Head of Service: Early Years	March 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average cost of top-up funding (overall and in different setting types), plus cost of annual fee uplifts (frequency and amounts) for independent and / or non-maintained specialist provision</li> <li>• Timeliness of, and waiting list numbers / times for, health services and assessments for children and young people with SEND, including Autism and ADHD, with consistent measures being utilised</li> <li>• Number of children and young people with SEND supported by the holiday activities programme, and feedback on the quality of the offer / support received</li> <li>• Findings from quality assurance activity on the effectiveness and impact of specialist educational provision for our children and young people with SEND</li> <li>• Themes of feedback received through, and relating to our, Local Offer for SEND</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent sector placement costs managed in line with Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan</li> <li>• Children with SEND and their families express satisfaction with the information, advice and support (where applicable) they receive</li> <li>• Children with SEND and their families have the knowledge and skills to best support their child whilst (where appropriate) waiting for a diagnosis</li> <li>• Children do not have to wait as long to receive support or formal clinical diagnosis</li> <li>• Families and professionals are able to find good quality, useful information via the Local Offer for SEND, as demonstrated by more positive feedback from all groups in SEND partnership surveys compared with previous years</li> <li>• The quality of support in settings is of a good standard, and we are able to evidence this consistently</li> <li>• Service costs are benchmarked against statistical comparators, so we can be sure we are achieving good value for Cheshire East residents</li> </ul>	
<b>Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people</b>				
<p>Work has been undertaken with local authority and ICB commissioning colleagues to further finalise actions, timescales, priorities and capacity to deliver several actions within this section, and to understand alignment with the Commissioning and Brokerage Transformation workstream.</p> <p>Reports on recommissioning of speech and language therapy (SALT) and short breaks contracts (including required contract changes as part of the recommission) have been circulated to the council's Children's Senior Leadership Team (CSLT) and Children and Families Committee, as needed. Reports on recommission arrangements for mediation and advocacy services are being prepared over the next few months. Findings and recommendations regarding the structure / operating model of the council's children's commissioning service were scheduled for sharing with the Commissioning and Brokerage Transformation Board (part of the council's wider transformation programme) by the end of April for agreement regarding onwards circulation and action (C1 / C2).</p>				

Work is continuing on the development of a service level agreement (SLA) document for use between the council and schools with resource provisions, with extensive input and feedback from colleagues within the council's legal service (C3). Further work on this action and others has been delayed as a result of capacity issues within the children's commissioning team (which action C2 aims to alleviate).

A tracker and process is in place for decision making and support to manage fee challenges and requests for fee increases / uplifts for specialist independent and non-maintained provision (C4) but this needs to be fully documented.

Procurement activity is commencing for the 2025 Holiday Activity Funding, with procurement due to open in May 2025, followed by evaluation in June 2025 and go live in July 2025. There are three priorities within this procurement, with the first priority being SEND (followed by teen and new geographical footprint). A report on impact (e.g. additional SEND spaces and attendance from children with SEND in summer etc) will be prepared for September 2025, in line with action (C14) timescales.

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## 6. Data and Information

What needs to improve				
Efficiency and accuracy by which information on children and young people is captured, maintained and utilised to inform service delivery				
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve consistency of data across different providers and remove any data gaps or issues as far as possible to ensure operational and strategic work is informed by accurate data</li> <li>• Increase and/or establish clear mechanisms for information sharing across organisations and within partnership governance to evidence priority areas or reasons for recommendations</li> <li>• Improve case management systems through agreed changes or implementation of new systems, as appropriate, to ensure they optimally support operational and strategic work</li> </ul>			
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
DI1	Analyse data within the Neurodiversity Data Portal to identify data gaps and required improvements	Designated Clinical Officer (DCO)	To be determined	On track
DI2	Work with different providers of 0-25 Autism and ADHD assessment and support pathways to ensure they report consistent metrics	Designated Clinical Officer (DCO)	To be determined	On track
DI3	Review compliance of adult Dynamic Support Database (DSD) against national guidelines and undertake any required actions to ensure compliance	Head of All-Age Continuing Care	To be determined	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
DI4	Implement the new shared digital platform for children and young people's mental health in line with the Cheshire and Merseyside Beyond Programme	Programme Lead – Mental Health and Neurodiversity	To be determined	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
DI6	Review data around primary area of need of children and young people with an EHCP and identify any issues in the process to identify, capture, record and report on this <i>[links with action EHC-C6]</i>	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND Business Intelligence Manager	October 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
DI7	Review all data sharing agreements to ensure they are up to date, accurate, accessible and support multi-agency working	Head of Integrated Commissioning	December 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
DI8	Conduct a data cleansing exercise to review captured information on projected placement end dates for all current EHC Plans	Head of Service: Inclusion	May 2026	Not yet started; no

				risk anticipated
DI9	Agree and deliver a robust plan for delivering improvements to SEND aspects of local authority case management systems (i.e. Liquidlogic / ContrOCC) for 2025/2026	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND ICT Project Manager	August 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
DI10	Conduct an initial robust data collection on children and young people in, or anticipated to be in, high-cost placements and/or complex cases, and agree process to collate and share this across education, health and social care colleagues on an ongoing basis	Head of Service: Inclusion Children and Families Health Consultant	September 2025	On track
<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number / percentage of children and young people with EHCPs with each need type as their primary need</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders have a clear understanding of performance for all 0-25 Autism and ADHD assessment and support pathways across Cheshire East due to regular reporting with consistent metrics</li> <li>Multi-agency partnership working and pathways are effectively facilitated by appropriate data sharing agreements and effective case management systems</li> </ul>	
<b>Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people</b>				
Work on data collection of high-cost placements (action DI10) and/or complex cases is closely linked with establishing processes and panels for such cases (as outlined in actions in <a href="#">section 3A</a> ), and therefore the action owner and due date for this action has been aligned with action EHC-A4.				

## 7. Funding and Finance

What needs to improve				
Effectiveness of funding and financial frameworks to ensure children and young people's individual needs are met through the most appropriate provision to support them to achieve positive outcomes within a sustainable system				
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that resources are managed as effectively and efficiently as possible to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children and young people through improved financial oversight, collaboration and commitments across partners and robust decision making processes at appropriate levels</li> <li>• Introduce a banding system for the allocation of funding associated with EHCPs across all age ranges and setting types (both mainstream and special) to modernise our system and ensure it is equitable for all children and young people, accurately represents children and young people's needs and is aligned to national plans</li> <li>• Provide fair and appropriate funding and support to all children and young people with EHCPs that enables them to be effectively supported to make progress towards their individual outcomes and provides flexibility to schools and settings to facilitate delivery of effective, creative, more inclusive provision of high quality</li> <li>• Provide clear information on the role of personal budgets associated with EHCPs, including all associated responsibilities and oversight processes, to ensure they are used appropriately and most effectively</li> </ul>			
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
FF1	Agree and implement a scheme of delegation and robust processes to ensure that all key financial decisions relating to SEND are signed off at appropriate levels, with key decisions being made at Head of Service or Director level as required	To be allocated	To be determined	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FF2	Work with a multi-agency group (including representatives from schools/settings, parents/carers and professionals) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• undertake decision around selecting a child led approach or institutional led approach for a new banding system</li> <li>• create a proposed set of banding descriptors and associated bands</li> </ul>	Senior Project Manager (K)	September 2025	On track
FF3	Run a pilot period to test and refine the proposed banding descriptors and associated bands	Senior Project Manager (K)	January 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FF4	Moderate and convert all children and young people with existing EHCPs onto the new system, ensuring they have the appropriate banding level in line with their needs and required support	Senior Project Manager (K)	August 2027	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

FF5	Ensure all systems and processes are in place (including any required disapplications) to facilitate new banding system being fully operational for all EHCPs going forward	Senior Project Manager (K)	September 2027	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FF6	Undertake a review of practice relating to use of the new banding descriptors and model and their integration into business as usual	To be allocated	September 2028	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FF7	Local Authority and ICB colleagues to jointly review and further explore potential financial contributions from health partners, including support at an individual and strategic level such as contributions to provision, and seek to reach agreement on where this may be appropriate	Children and Families Health Consultant	July 2025	On track
FF8	Review and refresh our existing policy and associated paperwork (such as direct payment agreements) relating to personal budgets associated with EHC Plans	Senior Project Manager (I)	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FF9	Prepare clear operational guidance for professionals on personal budgets associated with EHC Plans to increase their effectiveness and ensure responsibilities are clear	Senior Project Manager (I)	January 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FF10	Prepare clear guidance and support information for parents / carers on personal budgets associated with EHC Plans to increase their effectiveness and ensure responsibilities are clear	Senior Project Manager (I)	January 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FF11	Review and update information relating to personal budgets associated with EHC Plans on the Cheshire East Local Offer for SEND	Senior Project Manager (I)	January 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average cost of top-up funding (overall and in different setting types)</li> <li>• Total spend – actual expenditure v forecast / budget</li> <li>• Number / percentage of requests for, and agreements for, plus average cost of personal budgets associated with EHCPs</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forecasted overall cost avoidance targets achieved (year on year) in line with our Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan</li> </ul>
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**Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people**

A Delivery Lead (Senior Project Manager - K) has been identified to lead delivery of actions on high needs banding, building on previous work undertaken by a subgroup of the Schools' Forum comprised of local authority colleagues, school representatives and parents/carers. The Delivery Lead joined the council from 8 April 2025 to focus solely on this area.

## 8. Training

What needs to improve				
Clear, consistent, easily accessed training offer across the partnership which is impactful in upskilling professionals and families to effectively support our children and young people with SEND				
<b>Areas for improvement</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure there is a clear and easy to access partnership training offer to upskill stakeholders in effectively identifying and supporting children and young people's needs (including in relation to their education, health and wellbeing) which has documented methods for measuring impact and is informed by feedback and information arising from performance and quality assurance activity</li> </ul>		
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
TG1	Assess and evaluate existing training offers to schools/settings and partners	Inclusion Quality Officer (A)	April 2025	Complete
TG2	Research, develop and commission a SEND Partnership universal offer of multi-agency training courses for 2025/2026 with external/internal providers including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what can be delivered internally and what would need an external commission</li> <li>linked to SEMH, ASC, SCLN, health and wellbeing, such as ELSA, AET, Emotion Coaching and SALT and trauma-informed practice</li> </ul>	Inclusion Quality Officer (A)	July 2025	On track
TG3	Deliver developed SEND Partnership universal training offer for 2025/2026 to local authority staff, partner agencies, schools/settings and parents/carers	Inclusion Quality Officer (A)	July 2026	On track
TG4	Agree a business as usual process for the development and delivery of an annual multi-agency Cheshire East SEND Partnership universal training offer	Inclusion Quality Officer (A)	January 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
TG5	Develop and deliver a 2025/2026 schedule of Liquidlogic training for all schools and settings (0-25), and develop a process for embedding this as business as usual annual training activity	Inclusion Quality Officer (A) Business Intelligence Training Officer	July 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
TG6	Develop and deliver a 2025/2026 training programme to upskill social workers and children and family workers in the adult social care offer	Inclusion Quality Officer (A) Designated Social Care Officer	July 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

TG7	Develop and deliver a 2025/2026 training programme on health-based outcomes to promote cultural change for health staff	Inclusion Quality Officer (A) Designated Clinical Officer	July 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
TG8	Prepare a feasibility and options assessment on the roll out of restorative practice across SEND partnership stakeholders	SEND Training Co-ordinator	November 2025	On track

**See also specific training actions in:**

- 2. SEN Support and our Graduated Approach
- 3.A. EHC Needs Assessments and Plans – Decision making and panel processes
- 3.C. EHC Needs Assessments and Plan – Annual Reviews
- 4. Quality Assurance and Audits
- 10. Alternative Provision (AP) and EOTAS
- 11. Transition Between Educational Phases
- 12. Attendance
- 14.B. Wider Preparing for Adulthood Improvements

<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of SEND-related training sessions held and attendees</li> <li>• Feedback from attendees on quality, effectiveness and impact of training (short and long-term)</li> <li>• Number / percentage of educational settings with trained staff members for Liquidlogic</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive feedback on the quality, effectiveness and impact of training via specific training impact measures and SEND partnership surveys, along with more positive feedback overall from all groups on the quality of support received by our children and young people with SEND at all levels</li> <li>• Increased number of educational setting staff regularly utilising access to Liquidlogic and therefore making processes more efficient</li> <li>• Forecasted overall cost avoidance targets achieved (year on year) in line with our Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan</li> </ul>
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**Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people**

A single partnership SEND and inclusion training webpage has been established as part of our Local Offer for SEND at [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/SENDtraining](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/SENDtraining). This brings together all currently scheduled or on demand training, whether virtual or in-person, for all stakeholders within the Cheshire East SEND partnership. The Delivery Lead (Inclusion Quality Officer – A) has collated information on previously available training delivered by partnership teams and identified issues such as replication of the same training by multiple teams. The Delivery Lead is currently working closely with the SEND Training Co-ordinator to finalise a SEND Partnership universal offer of multi-agency training courses for 2025/2026, informed by identified training needs and gaps from previous analysis.

## Chapter 2 - Right Place

### 9. Educational Provision and Sufficiency

What needs to improve				
The sufficiency of suitable educational provision and placements that can meet children and young people's assessed needs				
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the sufficiency of specialist educational provision in the borough through new schools and increased capacity so that more children can be educated closer to their home and local communities</li> <li>• Clarify expectations around the use of specialist provision to ensure it is used appropriately and effectively targeted where it is most required</li> <li>• Increase our understanding of our post-16 cohort needs and available provision and pathways, and further develop our post-16 mainstream offer to ensure young people with EHCPs have choice and are able to continue learning in their local community</li> </ul>			
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
EPS1	Building on 2024 reviews, carry out reviews and viability assessments of remaining specialist provision in Cheshire East and their current designation	To be allocated	To be determined	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EPS2	Use data on numbers of EHC Plans and primary needs of children/young people, plus outcomes/findings from 2024 reviews of existing provision and intelligence from SEND team around potential gaps, to prepare an updated 0-25 SEND sufficiency statement and provision plan which sets out the number of places required in Cheshire East over 7 years to achieve a steady state and how this will be delivered	Project Manager – Education	June 2025	On track
EPS3	Produce a policy and resource allocation document outlining how we will use specialist provision (including Resource Provisions, SEN Units and special schools) in Cheshire East, including provision development and enhancement principles, to support decision making	Head of Service: Inclusion	July 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EPS4	Deliver 2025/2026 provision changes and improvements in line with the SEN sufficiency statement and provision plan and capital programme, and produce an initial report (to subsequently be prepared annually) outlining progress against the plan and impact to date	School Organisation and Capital Team Manager	September 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EPS5	Building on the 0-25 SEND sufficiency statement and provision plan, undertake a deep dive on the cohort and pathways for post-16 young people with EHCPs, including:	Area Delivery Manager – NEET and PFA	September 2025	Not yet started; no

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mapping current post-16 provision, pathways and commissioning arrangements used for Cheshire East young people with an EHCP</li> <li>Mapping existing and potential future cohort of Cheshire East post-16 young people with an EHCP (numbers/needs/geography etc)</li> <li>Working with Cheshire East post-16 mainstream settings to understand and identify current barriers to supporting young people with an EHCP</li> <li>Preparing a gap analysis for post-16 provision for young people with an EHCP</li> </ul>			risk anticipated
EPS6	Using gap analysis findings, develop and co-produce a policy and local mainstream education SEND offer with our local colleges to provide support for the post-16 cohort (including those with specialist needs, particularly social, emotional, mental health or autism needs) to support re-integration of young people into local mainstream provision and ensure that young people with EHCPs have choice and are able to continue learning in their local community	Area Delivery Manager – NEET and PFA	March 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EPS7	Develop a policy and local offer with early years providers to provide support to the early years cohort, including those with specialist needs	Head of Service: Early Years	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EPS8	Work with families to identify children and young people who are attending independent specialist provision whose outcomes may be improved by attendance in a Cheshire East special school from 2026/2027	Head of Service: Inclusion	March 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EPS9	Work with children and families to support a smooth placement change to a Cheshire East special school from 2026/2027	Head of Service: Inclusion	September 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EPS10	Produce and deliver 2025/2026 partnership communication plan relating to educational provision developments to increase parental and professional knowledge of, and confidence in, any newly developed provision	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND Communications Business Partner	July 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
EPS11	Produce and deliver 2026/2027 partnership communication plan relating to educational provision developments to increase parental and professional knowledge of, and confidence in, any newly developed provision	To be allocated	July 2027	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of high needs places in different placement types in Cheshire East compared with EHCPs / sufficiency requirements, mitigations and forecast</li> <li>Number / percentage of children and young people with EHCPs in:</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High needs places in different placement types meet sufficiency requirements, mitigations and forecasts</li> <li>Children and young people are being appropriately supported in the right setting in line with their needs</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mainstream provision</li> <li>- a specialist placement (including RP / SEN unit or special school)</li> <li>- non-maintained special school, independent special school or specialist post-16 institute</li> <li>- a Cheshire East setting or an out of borough setting</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forecasted overall cost avoidance targets achieved (year on year) in line with our Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan</li> </ul>
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**Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people**

Following extensive data and information analysis, an updated 0-25 SEND sufficiency statement and provision plan is currently being finalised and is scheduled for final sign off at the council's Children and Families Committee in June 2025 (via sharing at other required council meetings). Alongside this, planning conversations are continuing around specific proposed developments for specialist places within the borough.

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## 10. Alternative Provision (AP) and EOTAS

What needs to improve				
Clarity and effectiveness of decision making and use of alternative provision and educated other than at school (EOTAS) arrangements				
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure a strengthened alternative provision offer is in place in Cheshire East that better supports children and young people to make timely progress and reintegration to mainstream education, as appropriate, through a review of existing alternative provision arrangements and delivery of agreed improvements</li> <li>• Ensure clear and robust systems are in place to agree, track, monitor and review children and young people in alternative provision or educated other than at school, and to assure the quality of the provision and support they receive, in order to support successful progress towards their individual outcomes and progression into settings, as appropriate</li> </ul>			
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
APE1	Review, finalise and sign off first version of alternative provision operational guidance handbook for use by local authority and schools, covering short-term part-time AP use	Interim Head of Service: Education Participation and Pupil Support	July 2025	On track
APE2	Complete data analysis and prepare an initial annual report to share at the SEND and AP Partnership Board on use of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), permanent exclusions and use of alternative provision, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long KS3 and KS4 children stay at the PRU</li> <li>• Establish which schools permanently excluded (PEX) pupils are coming from and factors leading to these permanent exclusions, in order to understand how these could be reduced / avoided in the future and propose recommended actions to mitigate identified factors</li> </ul>	Interim Head of Service: Education Participation and Pupil Support	December 2025	On track
APE3	Develop an Alternative Provision and Section 19 (permanently excluded and medical needs etc) Sufficiency document that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an agreed definition and aims / principles of Alternative Provision</li> <li>• current and projected need and cohorts</li> <li>• review of current provision (including all current commissioning arrangements, providers, delivery models, funding and outcomes)</li> <li>• recommended development actions</li> </ul>	Interim Head of Service: Education Participation and Pupil Support	January 2026	On track
APE4	Review and further enhance alternative provision operational guidance handbook for use by local authority and schools to add information on longer-term AP use	Interim Head of Service: Education Participation and Pupil Support	January 2026	On track

APE5	Review and update our list of quality assured and/or currently used local authority commissioned alternative provision and work with them to support them moving onto our framework (flexible purchasing system) for alternative provision and/or completing DfE registration	Interim Head of Service: Education Participation and Pupil Support	September 2026	On track
APE6	Develop and document a quality assurance process for initial commissioning and ongoing monitoring of all used alternative provision, ensuring robust safeguarding arrangements are in place and responsibilities are defined regarding assurance of the setting and the individual provision	Interim Project Lead for Children's Commissioning	September 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
APE7	Review all existing PEX placements to ensure potential end dates and progress routes have been considered, and establish robust processes to agree these at the start of all future placements	Interim Head of Service: Education Participation and Pupil Support	July 2025	On track
APE8	Establish formal commissioning arrangements with the PRU and other providers supporting PEX/at risk of PEX pupils, including a Service Level Agreement (SLA) or formal contract as required, with clear expectations around monitoring arrangements and outcomes (such as progression and re-integration)	Interim Project Lead for Children's Commissioning	June 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
APE9	Undertake data cleansing exercise to identify and re-code any individuals that are incorrectly labelled as EOTAS (as at Spring Term 2024/2025)	Business Development Officer (J)	June 2025	On track
APE10	Agree and document clear processes for a) agreeing EOTAS arrangements for individuals b) funding and procuring/commissioning EOTAS arrangements for individuals (including use of personal budgets specifically for EOTAS and how provision clearly links to outcomes) c) monitoring and reviewing EOTAS arrangements for individuals	Business Development Officer (J)	November 2025	On track
APE11	Prepare and circulate internal EOTAS Operational Guidance for staff (which includes clear definition of what is and is not EOTAS)	Business Development Officer (J)	November 2025	On track
APE12	Undertake training on EOTAS (including EOTAS Operational Guidance and agreed EOTAS processes) for staff, undertake training on EOTAS for parents/carers and provide information on EOTAS to parents/carers	To be allocated	January 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
APE13	Review all individuals with current EOTAS arrangements (as at Spring Term 2024/2025) as part of their next EHCP annual review	To be allocated	September 2026	On track
APE14	Develop a core commissioned offer for EOTAS cases; where providers are not on the AP framework, establish a provider platform	Interim Project Lead for Children's Commissioning	September 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

APE15	Unpick and clarify access to therapies for children and young people on EOTAS arrangements with integrated care board and health trusts as part of contracts	To be allocated	To be determined	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number / percentage of children / young people attending the PRU / in alternative provision</li> <li>• Average length of placements for children attending the PRU / in alternative provision and information on their next steps / outcomes</li> <li>• Average and overall spend for alternative provision and EOTAS placements</li> <li>• Number / percentage of children / young people with EOTAS arrangements</li> <li>• Findings from quality assurance / audit activity to understand the quality of AP and EOTAS arrangements for children and young people, and their experiences and outcomes</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people's average time in alternative provision is reduced</li> <li>• Commissioning and spot purchasing of alternative provision is shaped by the findings and recommendations in quality assurance and audit activity</li> <li>• Leaders and practitioners have a good understanding of the need and use of alternative provision, which enables a long term forecast spend for alternative provision and EOTAS</li> </ul>	
<b>Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people</b>				
<p>Operational guidance for using Alternative Provision has been reviewed and updated, and this will go through SEND Transformation Action Group (TAG) governance for sign off.</p> <p>Quality assurance checks are completed on alternative provision that is being commissioned by the local authority and prioritised for any new provision that is identified. Internal services, such as the Tuition Team, have recently undergone quality assurance checks, aligning to the practice with commissioned services.</p> <p>Training with a focus on alternative provision, EOTAS and attendance was delivered in April 2025 to increase SEND team and wider professional knowledge and strengthen consistency of practice.</p> <p>Permanently excluded children are currently under review and placement planning is in place to ensure swifter reintegration into long term provision. Despite the increase in the reintegration of permanently excluded students, there remains an insufficiency of registered provision to meet the increasing demand of students being excluded, which highlights a risk to achieving efficient intervention and supported reintegration.</p> <p>A working definition for 'EOTAS' (Education Otherwise than at School) has been drafted and agreed by relevant education services, legal colleagues and the SEND Transformation Action Group (TAG); this was required to enable further work to take place around data cleansing, agreeing and documenting local processes and preparing the internal EOTAS Operational Guidance for staff. To further enable data cleansing, the Delivery Lead has met with colleagues from the SEND team and Business Intelligence to agree standard content for various fields in Liquidlogic case records and EHCPs, and specifically to scrutinise post-16 cases at various placements that may or may not be EOTAS cases in line with individual decisions and circumstances. A form to review current EOTAS cases has been drafted and trialled with one case, with agreement to trial one further case, before the form is refined and finalised.</p>				

## Chapter 3 - Right Time

### 11. Transition Between Educational Phases

What needs to improve				
Clear and consistent processes and information to facilitate a smooth experience for children and young people with SEND, and their families, when moving between educational phases				
Areas for improvement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the transition process and establish clear expectations and knowledge regarding transition to ensure that children, young people and families are supported and confident at key transition points (from early years through to adulthood) to reduce escalation of need</li> </ul>		
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
TEP1	Review existing transition process and complete research (including working with children/young people and families, and undertaking school/setting visits) to gain knowledge and understanding of best practice examples of transition, examples of 'what does good look like' and develop clear expectations for schools, partners, young people and parents regarding transition	Transition Manager	December 2024	Complete
TEP2	Document a refreshed and enhanced end-to-end transition process at the three main transition points for children and young people with all levels of SEND to clarify all roles, responsibilities and expectations to thereby improve communication, confidence and knowledge in transitions and enable an earlier start (e.g. at Nursery 1, Y5 and Y9) in order to reduce demand for escalation to an EHCP and/or change of placement to a specialist provision	Transition Manager	September 2025	On track
TEP3	Formally implement the new transition process with all stakeholders, including the SEND service and wider services, schools and settings so that they can forward plan their requirements	Transition Manager	December 2025	On track
TEP4	Support and guidance to be provided to schools, settings, children / young people, families and partnership professionals on the refreshed and enhanced end-to-end transition process and the offer in the next phase of education, including documents/resources and updated information on the Local Offer for SEND	Transition Manager	December 2025	On track
TEP5	Plan and deliver a 2025/2026 training programme for all schools and settings, SEND professionals, parents and carers tailored to educational phases (early years, primary/secondary, post-16), on the revised transition process and the offer in the next phase of education	Transition Manager	September 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

TEP6	Undertake a review of the impact and effectiveness of the refreshed and enhanced end-to-end transition process	Transition Manager	December 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers / percentages of requests for EHC needs assessments, and first EHCPs issued, at key transition points</li> <li>• Numbers / percentages of requests for change of placements (specifying if change of placement type and direction of change) at key transition points</li> <li>• Feedback from young people, parents/carers, and educational setting professionals of their experiences of transition via survey and/or audit activity</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people's needs are routinely identified and appropriately supported at the earliest opportunity, leading to a reduction in the number of / percentages of requests for EHC needs assessments, first EHCPs issued, and change or placement requests at key transition points, compared with previous years</li> <li>• Positive feedback from young people, parents/carers and educational setting professionals of their experiences of transition in surveys and audits</li> </ul>	
<b>Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people</b>				
<p>Following its initial development after the council's involvement in the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme, the Transition Team created links with all stakeholders (including through several task and finish groups) to gain their views on existing processes and good practice for transition between educational settings - including children and young people, families, settings, internal and external professionals, and other local authorities. The team then agreed regular space within the weekly Schools' and early years' bulletins to share good practice and promote effective transition support, and developed extensive <a href="#">online transition resources</a> for different phase transitions for both families and professionals as part of enhancing the transition process.</p> <p>The team has worked with various settings to pilot use of the new resources and guidance, including groups of early years children, year 5/6 children and year 10 children. Further work is now required to use learning from these initial pilots when developing the enhanced end-to-end transition process.</p> <p>The Transition Team has supported with development and delivery of various training sessions linked with transition and based on feedback/gaps in knowledge areas, particularly relating to preparing for adulthood and post-16 offers. Topics and audiences include: post-16 offer to professionals and secondary school SENCOs/Careers Leads, a consultation workshop with educational settings and local authority staff, online transition sessions for educational settings, Preparing for Adulthood e-learning, social care offer to professionals, early years transition training, and new SENCO training. The Transition Manager has also organised and delivered 'Planning Your Future' events for young people, families and professionals and supported with SEND careers events and training.</p> <p>The team has however struggled with capacity issues as various team members have left the team over time, leaving only the Transition Manager now in post. Work is now required to re-focus and re-prioritise the work in this area to enable the Manager's extensive skills to be best used, and revised actions have been agreed and captured in this plan to facilitate this.</p>				

## 12. Attendance

What needs to improve				
Effectiveness of attendance support and monitoring processes and resources to ensure children with SEND are able to access and attend education				
<b>Areas for improvement</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase attendance for children and young people with SEND (including those at SEN Support and with EHCPs)</li> <li>• Embed a consistent process to monitor attendance of all children with SEND, including children attending schools / settings outside of Cheshire East</li> <li>• Reduce the number of children with EHCPs missing education and ensure all children are able to access a suitable school placement and education acts a protective factor</li> </ul>		
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
A1	Revise, finalise and sign off attendance monitoring process flow and guidance in light of new EYES Liquidlogic module implementation	Interim Head of Service: Education Participation and Pupil Support	September 2025	On track
A2	Agree ongoing reporting mechanism to share information on attendance of children and young people with SEND (covering statutory school age, NEET, EHE and CME) with SEND and AP Partnership Board, and prepare initial annual report (including recommendations for the board)	Interim Head of Service: Education Participation and Pupil Support	December 2025	On track
A3	Finalise and sign off process flow and guidance regarding steps in case of children with EHCPs approaching risk of exclusion	Interim Head of Service: Education Participation and Pupil Support	July 2025	On track
A4	Complete review of children and young people with SEND who have become electively home educated (EHE) during academic year 2023/24 and 2024/25 to identify any themes around this decision and/or whether there is a higher rate of EHE from specific schools	Senior Project Manager (J)	July 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
A5	Undertake targeted work and support with schools that have been identified as having recent high levels of children with SEND becoming electively home educated (EHE)	Senior Project Manager (J)	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
A6	Undertake training with, and provide guidance resources to, SEND team colleagues to increase their understanding of how to support children with EHCPs missing education	SEND Training Co-ordinator Interim Head of Service: Education Participation and Pupil Support	April 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact

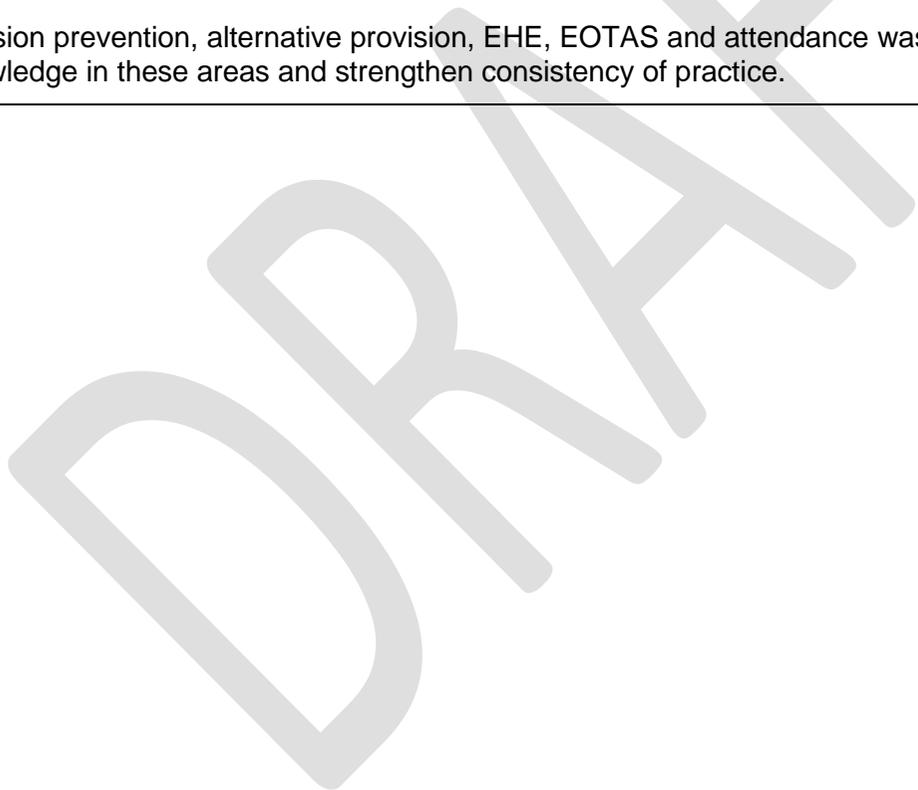
<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance rates for children and young people with SEND</li> <li>• Exclusion rates for children and young people with SEND</li> <li>• Number / percentage of children and young people with SEND that are electively home educated (EHE) and themes around this</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved attendance rates for children with SEND</li> <li>• Reduced exclusion rates for children and young people with SEND</li> <li>• Parental confidence that young people's needs are met in their provision, which results in a steadying of the number of children becoming EHE</li> </ul>
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**Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people**

SEND keyworkers are working more closely with the Education Access officer to intervene where children are identified at risk of exclusion.

Case example of impact (March 2025) - joined up working between SEND keyworker, Education Access Officer, school and police to prevent the permanent exclusion of a 14-year-old with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. A multi-agency meeting ensured timely action planning and decision making; suitable alternative education was sourced swiftly and appropriate support put in place for the young person, enabling the school to rescind the permanent exclusion.

Training with a focus on exclusion prevention, alternative provision, EHE, EOTAS and attendance was delivered in April 2025 to the SEND team and wider professionals to increase knowledge in these areas and strengthen consistency of practice.



### 13. Communication and Learning From Feedback, Complaints and Appeals

What needs to improve				
Clear, accurate, transparent and timely shared information and responses to learning to improve the experiences and satisfaction of our children and young people, their families and partnership professionals				
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the experiences and satisfaction of our parent/carers and children and young people and reduce the number of complaints, tribunals and local government ombudsmen (LGO) referrals through improved communication (including evaluating and addressing common communication issues) and providing clarity on expectations</li> <li>• Further strengthen our Local Offer for SEND (in conjunction with our Family Hubs Digital Offer) to ensure families and professionals can easily access useful, accurate and relevant information on support available to promote good development and wellbeing in children and young people.</li> <li>• Ensure comprehensive awareness raising regarding the presence of our Local Offer for SEND amongst families and professionals, (including those in communities and universal services, as well as those in more SEND specific services).</li> </ul>			
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
FCA1	Carry out an audit to understand the reasons behind the significant number of SEND mediations and appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND), along with analysis of mediation / appeal outcomes, in order to identify learning and service / process improvement recommendations	SEND Customer Services and Complaints Officer	June 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact
FCA2	Carry out a review of refusals to conduct an EHC needs assessment and/or issue an EHCP, including appeals and any decision changes, in order to identify learning and service / process improvement recommendations	SEND Customer Services and Complaints Officer	June 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact
FCA3	Local authority and Parent Carer Forum to work jointly to identify common SEND communication issues arising between parents / carers and the local authority, and then to carry out agreed actions to improve these	Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND PCF Chair / Vice-Chair	September 2025	On track
FCA4	Finalise Memorandum of Understanding between the local authority, ICB and Parent Carer Forum	<b>LA:</b> Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND <b>PCF:</b> PCF Chair / Vice-Chair <b>ICB:</b> Head of Integrated Commissioning	June 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact

FCA5	Refresh the SEND team communication promise to clarify communication expectations between the SEND team, families and professionals	SEND Customer Services and Complaints Officer	October 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FCA6	Agree a mechanism for regular collation, analysis and sharing of SEND themes from ICB and health provider complaints and feedback to SEND and AP Partnership, and prepare an initial annual report covering this information along with any recommendations or actions	Designated Clinical Officer	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FCA7	Agree a mechanism for regular collation, analysis and sharing of SEND themes from children's and adults' social care complaints and feedback to SEND and AP Partnership, and prepare an initial annual report covering this information along with any recommendations or actions	Designated Social Care Officer	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FCA8	Develop a robust ongoing process to collate, share and annually publish feedback on our Local Offer for SEND and to agree improvement actions in response	Business Development Officer (C)	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FCA9a	Prepare and publish a 2025 annual update to embed a 'you said, we did' approach and clearly explain where working TOGETHER (including strategic coproduction) and feedback has made an impact on change, and where this has not been possible	Business Development Manager (V)	January 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FCA9b	Prepare and publish a 2026 annual update to embed a 'you said, we did' approach and clearly explain where working TOGETHER (including strategic coproduction) and feedback has made an impact on change, and where this has not been possible	To be allocated	January 2027	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FCA9c	Prepare and publish a 2027 annual update to embed a 'you said, we did' approach and clearly explain where working TOGETHER (including strategic coproduction) and feedback has made an impact on change, and where this has not been possible	To be allocated	January 2028	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FCA10	Agree and deliver a priority action plan to further improve and develop the Local Offer for SEND during 2025/2026 based on feedback and previous external review recommendations	Business Development Officer (C)	August 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FCA11	Agree and deliver a priority action plan to further improve and develop the Local Offer for SEND during 2026/2027 based on feedback	Business Development Officer (C)	August 2027	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
FCA12	Relaunch 'SENDing you the news' e-newsletter and online content with agreed delivery plan for 2025/2026	Communications Business Partner	September 2025	On track

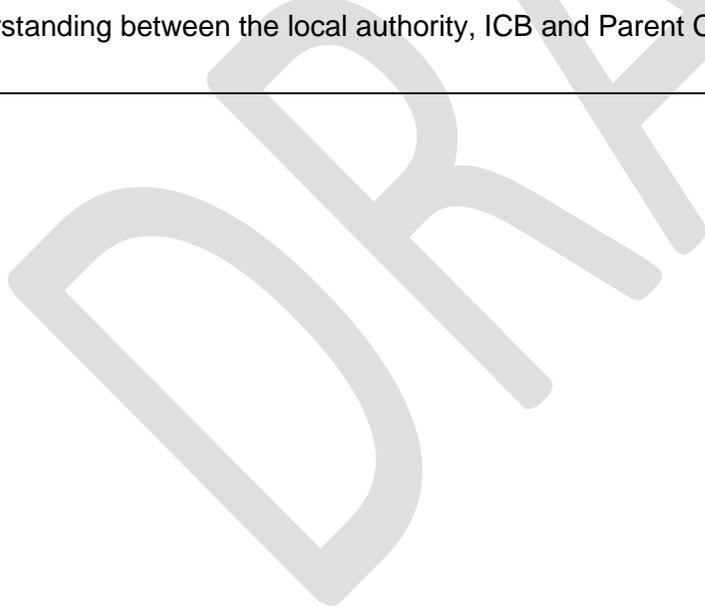
<p><b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and themes of SEND-related compliments and complaints received by the local authority, ICB and health trusts</li> <li>• Number and themes of mediations and appeals registered with the First-tier Tribunal</li> <li>• Themes of feedback received through, and relating to our, Local Offer for SEND and access rates</li> <li>• Uptake of partnership 'SENDing you the news' newsletter</li> <li>• Feedback from young people, parents/carers, and professionals from educational settings and the wider partnership on communication via our SEND surveys</li> </ul>	<p><b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in the number of SEND-related complaints received by the local authority, ICB and health trusts</li> <li>• Reduction in the number of mediations and appeals registered with the First-tier Tribunal</li> <li>• More positive feedback on communication, and greater awareness of the Local Offer for SEND, from young people with SEND, their parents and carers, educational setting staff and wider partnership professionals in SEND partnership surveys compared with previous years</li> </ul>
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**Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people**

An annual report covering tribunal, complaints and mediations for the last calendar year has been drafted and shared for consideration with internal managers. This document now requires finalising and sign-off, with agreement of any recommendations.

Regular weekly meetings take place between the Parent Carer Forum Co-Chair and the Strategic Transformation Lead for SEND, and Parent Carer Forum representatives have a standing item to share arising views of their members at the SEND and AP Partnership Board (which meets every 2 months). Communication issues have been shared at both of these meetings and the required task now is to document the top issues and agree mitigating actions.

A draft Memorandum of Understanding between the local authority, ICB and Parent Carer Forum has been prepared and requires final review and sign off from all parties.



## 14. Preparing for Adulthood

### What needs to improve

The quality, consistency and timeliness of support, advice, information and guidance given to support children and young people with SEND in achieving good outcomes in adulthood

### A. Birth to Thrive

<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More seamless and consistent transition for young people when moving between support and services provided for children by the council and partners to the local support and service offer for adults</li> <li>• Better joined up working between different colleagues involved in supporting young people in moving between children's and adults' services and support, supported by a new service with clear roles, responsibilities and processes</li> </ul>			
<b>Note</b>	This section contains actions being carried out under the 'Birth to Thrive' (B2T) Transformation Project, which have been distinguished from wider preparing for adulthood actions in section B, noting the focus of the B2T project on the development of options for a new service. Pending formal decision on the vision, scope and structure of the new service, some wider actions may fall under the remit of the new service.			
Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
<b>Phase 1: Strategic Planning</b>				
B2T-1.1	Define the vision, objectives and service scope, and agree the key outcomes the new service will achieve	ICC Transformation Programme Project Manager	March 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact
B2T-1.2	Undertake a horizon scan to identify model options / areas of best practice for transitions and preparing for adulthood policies and functions	ICC Transformation Programme Project Manager	December 2024	Complete
B2T-1.3	Review current processes and practice to map current transitions and preparing for adulthood (PfA) activities across children's and adults' social care to inform model options and areas for operational efficiency and improved user experience	ICC Transformation Programme Project Manager	March 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact
B2T-1.4	Complete analysis of available financial information and data related to children's social care and SEN to inform options development (modelling in-scope cohorts and implications for service structure and staffing requirements)	ICC Transformation Programme Project Manager	March 2025	Complete but need to evidence impact

B2T-1.5	Complete engagement with internal and external stakeholders on options for the new service	To be allocated	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
B2T-1.6	Develop new or review existing policies to guide the operations of the service (e.g. transitions from children's social care into adult social care; a multi-agency working framework), informed by agreement on the scope of the new service	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration (Drafting support: ICC Transformation Programme Project Manager)	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
B2T-1.7	Establish the new governance structure for service	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration (Drafting support: ICC Transformation Programme Project Manager)	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
<b>Phase 2: Design</b>				
B2T-2.1	Prepare a detailed design of the new service, including team structures, management hierarchy, and integration points with adults' and children's social care / health partners / education services	To be allocated	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
B2T-2.2	Develop staffing and workforce guidance and considerations, including: assessment of role-realignment if required, identification of new roles, draft JDs and engagement with HR	To be allocated	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
B2T-2.3	Develop budget and funding strategy for staffing, IT systems and infrastructure, training and development	To be allocated	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
B2T-2.4	Develop service workflows for referrals, case allocation, multi-agency working, and define service level agreements with partners	To be allocated	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
B2T-2.5	Assess and review existing case management systems / local level databases and explore improved processes for tracking transitions and EHCP processes <i>[linking with actions in section 3.A. Decision Making and Panel Processes]</i>	To be allocated	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated

B2T-2.6	Agree Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for service performance monitoring	To be allocated	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
<b>Phase 3: Implementation</b>				
B2T-3.1	Conduct staff consultation and transition plan for impacted roles, as applicable	To be allocated	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
B2T-3.2	Develop communication strategy for internal and external stakeholders (staff briefings; FAQ documents; parent carer forum engagement; newsletters; school staff briefings etc)	To be allocated	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
B2T-3.3	Undertake service piloting and rollout, pending decision on agreed model and phased cohort rollout	To be allocated	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
B2T-3.4	Agree quality and performance metrics and monitoring arrangements, and establish feedback mechanisms, including regular review processes	To be allocated	TBC	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
<b>How we'll assess if we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total spend – actual expenditure v forecast / budget</li> <li>Number / percentage of children and young people with EHCPs in specialist post-16 institutes</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forecasted overall cost avoidance targets achieved (year on year) in line with our Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan</li> </ul>	
<b>Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people</b>				
<p>Most recently, a Birth to Thrive visioning workshop was held on 10 March 2025 to look at target cohorts, remit, scope and shared vision for a new service, with findings from the workshop reflected at the next Project Board meeting on 12 March 2025.</p> <p>A recommendation report summarising all findings and recommendations to date has been produced and is being reviewed by the council's Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration, with a briefing on the content delivered to CSLT on 2 April 2024. As the project moves into coproduction and wider partner and parent/carers engagement, the vision and scope may be refined, but there is an in-principle agreement to take into the detailed design work: progressing design of a new Preparing for Adulthood Navigator Service and a new Integrated Disability Service (adults' and children's). This was then shared with the Council's Transformation Board on week commencing 7 April 2025.</p> <p>There is a risk relating to future Birth to Thrive actions in that capacity to project manage and drive work still needs to be identified for the Birth to Thrive project going forward, following initial work undertaken by Inner Circle project capacity (which ceased in March 2025).</p>				

## B. Wider Preparing for Adulthood Improvements

<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further expand our Supported Internship offer to enable more choice and opportunities for our young people with SEND around employment options</li> <li>• Further strengthen tools, practice guidance and available resources for supporting planning around preparing for adulthood, particularly in relation to careers, employment and independent travel</li> <li>• Ensure local authority professionals, educational setting staff and parents / carers are fully informed on the range of post-16 pathways and are able to offer effective support around career planning and outcome setting for children and young people with SEND as they prepare for adulthood</li> </ul>
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Ref	Action	Action Owner	Due by	Action Rating
PFA1	Produce and launch an online training suite of resources for employers to support inclusive recruitment pathways for young people with SEND	Supported Internship Lead	May 2025	Complete
PFA2	Develop and implement a 'Project SEARCH' model of Supported Internships to offer more choice and placements to our young people with SEND	Supported Internship Lead	September 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
PFA3	Work with 2 additional special schools to develop a Supported Internship pathway for their learners	Supported Internship Lead	September 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
PFA4	Develop and pilot a measurement tool to track progress of our supported interns (linked with preparing for adulthood and health and wellbeing indicators)	Supported Internship Lead Consultant in Public Health	July 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
PFA5	Continue to grow Cheshire East Supported Internships to enable choice and more opportunities by developing 2 operational models with a minimum of 60 available places	Supported Internship Lead	September 2027	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
PFA6	Update our preparing for adulthood policy and practice guidance to reflect evidence based best practice and to support strong partnership working	Area Delivery Manager – NEET and PFA	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
PFA7	Evaluate PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) person-centred planning tool pilot outcomes and impact, and agree next steps	Principal Educational Psychologist	May 2025	On track
PFA8	Training for <b>local authority colleagues</b> (across education and social care) on the following areas specifically for young people with SEND:	Area Delivery Manager – NEET and PFA	December 2025	On track

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>careers advice and guidance</li> <li>post-16 offer (options and pathways)</li> <li>planning and writing SMART preparing for adulthood EHCP outcomes, especially relating to the young person's employment / careers aspiration</li> </ul>			
PFA9	<p>Training for <b>educational setting staff</b> (careers leads and SENCOs) on the following areas specifically for young people with SEND:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>careers advice and guidance</li> <li>post-16 offer (options and pathways)</li> <li>planning and writing SMART preparing for adulthood EHCP outcomes, especially relating to the young person's employment / careers aspiration</li> </ul>	Area Delivery Manager – NEET and PFA	December 2025	On track
PFA10	<p>Training for <b>parents and carers</b> on the following areas specifically for young people with SEND:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>careers advice and guidance</li> <li>post-16 offer (options and pathway)</li> <li>planning and writing SMART preparing for adulthood EHCP outcomes, especially relating to the young person's employment / careers aspiration</li> </ul>	Area Delivery Manager – NEET and PFA	December 2025	On track
PFA11	Review and enhance our online Local Offer for SEND (and wider digital offer) around Preparing for Adulthood planning process, plus careers advice, guidance and information on possible options and pathways for young people with SEND	Area Delivery Manager – NEET and PFA Business Development Officer (C)	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
PFA12	Review Preparing for Adulthood booklet to ensure it contains useful information around careers advice, guidance and information on possible options and pathways for young people with SEND	Area Delivery Manager – NEET and PFA	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
PFA13	In conjunction with other colleagues, prepare and deliver promotion plan for Preparing for Adulthood booklet to ensure local authority workforce, educational setting staff (careers leads and SENCOs) and parents/carers are aware of it	Area Delivery Manager – NEET and PFA	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
PFA14	Build into EHCP template and/or guidance notes that all post-14 EHCPs have an outcome relating to their employment/careers aspiration	Area Delivery Manager – NEET and PFA	December 2025	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
PFA15	Develop and deliver an action plan to roll out independent travel training for young people with SEND during 2025/2026 academic year	Skills and Lifelong Learning Service Team Manager	July 2026	Not yet started; no risk anticipated
<b>How we'll assess if we've</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)</li> </ul>	<b>What we will see when we've</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared with previous years</li> </ul>	

<b>addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of young people on a Supported Internship and number of places / providers offering Supported Internships</li> <li>• Number / percentage of young people moving from a Supported Internship into paid employment</li> <li>• Feedback from young people and employers during and following a Supported Internship</li> <li>• Number / percentage of children and young people with EHCPs in specialist post-16 institutes</li> <li>• Number / percentage of young people completing independent travel training and percentage that then travel independently</li> </ul>	<b>addressed this area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in number of young people on a Supported Internship, and number of places / providers offering Supported Internships, and in the percentage of young people moving into paid employment following a Supported Internship</li> <li>• Increased number of young people with SEND that are able to, and confident in, traveling independently</li> </ul>
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**Key improvement activities delivered to date in 2025 and what impact we are achieving for children and young people**

An online training suite of resources for employers to support inclusive recruitment pathways for young people with SEND was launched on National Supported Internship Day (27 March 2025). The eLearning created for employers is available online at: [Training for employers](#), with wider information on Supported Internships also available online at: [Supported Internship information](#). Information on the new resources and information was shared via a press release and circulated to employers via a targeted supported internship newsletter. Information was also circulated to educational settings (for sharing with their students), to parents/carers (with an ask to share with their own employers also) and to local authority staff via internal newsletter.

A pilot has been conducted using the PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) person-centred planning tool with 10 post-16 young people with SEND. The criteria for these PATHs focused on young people with established EHCPs transitioning to a new setting or a new programme within their current setting. Work is now focusing on finalising a summary report of findings, which include examples of placement success and mediation prevention.



# Your thoughts matter

If you have any views on this document or on how we can improve our services, please do contact us at [SENDPartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:SENDPartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

