

SEND and AP Local Area Inspection Action Plan

November 2025

Context:

Cumberland SEND & AP Partnership already had a SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) strategy 2025 - 2028 which had been developed by Cumberland's Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board. This includes Cumberland Council, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, SEND Alliance Cumbria (SENDAC, our Parent Carer Forum), children and young people with SEND (including those who's needs would be best met by accessing Alternative Provision), education and health providers, and links with Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board which commissions health services for the Millom area of Cumberland's local authority footprint.

Working with stakeholders, our vision was that ***We believe that all children and young people deserve and should receive access to excellent services, a fulfilling and well-rounded education, and the chance to reach their full potential. We believe children with SEND and those whose needs would be best met by accessing Alternative Provision in Cumberland deserve high quality, local support, services and provision.*** To support this the following priorities were developed to improve the outcomes and lived experiences of children and young people with SEND and those accessing Alternative Provision in Cumberland. A Summary of this can be found on our [Local Offer](#).

1. Working Together and building trust
2. High Quality local Provision and services
3. Improving outcomes
4. Preparing for and moving into adulthood
5. A supportive, effective alternative provision
6. Valuing our children and young people and achieving best value in Cumberland

In response to the inspection, and in line with statutory guidance, the partnership has outlined and addressed the 2 recommendations identified in the inspection.

Areas for improvement:

1. The partnership should ensure that contributions to inform the development of children's and young people's EHC plans come from all partners, especially health and social care, so that the needs of these children and young people are fully reflected.
2. The partnership should continue to strengthen its understanding of the impact of its work to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND by: -
 - a) securing accurate information about the current waiting times for access to CAMHS, and the number of children and young people waiting to access this service in all areas of Cumberland, including those bordering other partnership areas
 - b) embedding the newly developed programme of developmental checks for children and young people aged five to 19, so that there is a greater understanding of how effectively the programme is identifying the needs of children and young people with SEND
 - c) making best use of readily available information on attendance, exclusions and suspensions to spot trends and patterns that might suggest the vulnerability of some children and young people
 - d) ensuring that all this information is successfully incorporated into any evaluations of impact, and in the partnership's strategic work to make further improvements

Accountable Leads				BRAG Rating	
1	NB	Natalie Bevan	SEND & AP Transformation and Improvement Lead, CCC		Action completed - monitoring impact
	DW	Diane Watson	Designated Clinical Officer, NENC ICB		Action on target for delivery
	RS	Rachel Slee	Designated Clinical Officer, NENC ICB		Action has issues with delivery
	EC	Elaine Croll	Designated Clinical Officer, LSC ICB		Action not on target for delivery
	CB	Carol Brown	Senior Manager Partnership and Improvement, CC		Action not started
	AMC	Alison Mills Clarke	Designated Social Care Officer, CCC		
2a	PC	Peter Chapman	Associate Director SEND and Complexity, L&SC ICB		
	JA	Janet Arris	Deputy Director of Delivery NENC ICB		
2b	CK	Claire King	Assistant Director Public Health, CCC		
	CB	Carol Brown	Senior Manager Partnership and Improvement, CCC		
2c	KN	Kirsty Nellist	Service Manager Access and Inclusion, CCC		
	NB	Natalie Bevan	SEND & AP Transformation and Improvement Lead, CCC		
	JA	Janet Arris	Deputy Director of Delivery NENC ICB		
2d	EH	Emma Hamer	Assistant Director Education, SEND & Inclusion		
	NB	Natalie Bevan	SEND & AP Transformation and Improvement Lead, CC		
	JA	Janet Arris	Deputy Director of Delivery NENC ICB		
	CB	Carol Brown	Senior Manager Partnership and Improvement, CC		
	CK	Claire King	Assistant Director Public Health, CCC		
	GG	Georgina Grant	SENDAC Parent Carer Forum		

Ref	Outcome	Lead	Specific Actions to Achieve Outcome	Strategy Priority	Expected completion date	R A G	Evidence of Outcome
1	Children and young people's Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) are co-produced with meaningful contributions from education, health, and social care partners, ensuring that all identified needs are fully reflected and appropriately supported.	Establish a multi-agency Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Quality Assurance (QA) group					
		NB / CB	Establish a clear baseline of advice for new Education Health and Care plans which measure specificity, relevance and clarity of advice. This will be measured through feedback surveys, reflective practice logs, and observed changes in multi-agency collaboration	1	Jan-26		Practitioners demonstrate increased confidence and consistency in providing advice aligned with the baseline criteria. Parents and Practitioners report that advice in new Education, Health and Care plans is clear, relevant, and specific.
			Implement a Local Area tracking system to monitor timely and complete advice from all partners for statutory assessments		Mar-26		70% of new EHCPs through Invision 360 to meet "Good" or "Better" quality standards increase term-on-term. Increased compliance with timely submission of advice for statutory assessment and reviews to support effective decision making and planning for children and young people with SEND
			Develop a cycle of termly thematic multiagency audits to support continuous improvement and focus on priority areas such as annual reviews or vulnerable populations such as looked after children		Feb-26		Professionals have a clearer understanding of the strategic priorities and how their work contributes to improved outcomes for children and young people, reporting to the QA workstream Feedback from children, young people, parents and carers following the completion of a new plan is gathered and suggest 40% are satisfied by June 2026. There is a reduction of 50% of complaints to the Statutory SEND team on parent carers unhappy with the content of their EHCP.
			Review request for advice process and operating procedures across Education, Health and Care to ensure it supports timeliness of advice		Dec-26		70% of new EHCPs through Invision 360 to meet "Good" or "Better" quality standards increase term-on-term and delivered in the statutory timescales

			Strengthen the communication between partners to support effective joint working for statutory assessments and Education, Health and Care plan reviews.		Quarterly		Report quarterly on EHCP quality demonstrates progress on the key indicators above to the SEND & AP Partnership Board
		Develop and agree a shared template for multi-agency advice contributions from health					
		DW/ RS / EC	Review the current health advice templates in use and agree with health services one consistent template	2	Apr-26		The quality of health advice and plans will improve because there will be greater consistency in content that will aid accuracy in recording children and young peoples health needs, provision and outcomes and capturing that effectively in plans. 90% of health advice submitted will be on the agreed template
			Develop written guidance for health teams in partnership with the Local Authority SEND team on the provision of timely high quality health advice		Apr-26		
			Training sessions to be delivered to each health service on writing good quality health advice for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment on the agreed template		Jul-26		
			Each Health trust to work with the Designated Clinical Officer for SEND (DCO) to identify SEND quality assurance champions/ leads to whom the DCO will provide support and training		Oct-26		
			Develop monitoring systems within health organisation and services to enable the provision of quarterly reports on the timeliness of health advice.		Dec-26		Improved governance and reporting mechanisms to Boards (SEND and Integrated Care Boards) will provide greater assurance that children and young people with SEND are the recipients of timely and good quality health contributions that inform key decision-making forums and plans.

		Develop and agree a shared template for multi- agency advice contributions from Educational Psychology, children's and adult social care.				
AMC / CB / HS	Audit existing advice templates across the services	2&4	Jan-25		Each service area will monitor advice monthly to ensure the EHC plan is clear and specific to education settings, parents and carers.	
	Develop a template with clear sections, guidance and notes		Mar-26		70% increase in new EHCPs rated “Good” or better in multi-agency audits where the new template was used.	
	Provide training and support to all Educational Psychologists & social care professionals on how to provide good quality advice		Jun-26		100 % of Educational Psychology staff trained in using the template. 60% of relevant Children and Adult social care staff trained in using the new template	
	Identify Social Care champions in each service area to support the quality of advice		Jun-26			
	Review the use of the Invision 360 tool for the statutory SEND team to ensure advice is reflected in final EHC plans		Dec-25		70% increase in new EHCPs rated “Good” or better in multi-agency audits where the new template was used.	
	Co-produce with SENDAC an online form that parents and carers can use to share their experience of the EHCP process. Link to survey shared with copy of final plan.	1	Jan-26		An increase of 70% of parent surveys are completed for new EHC plans by June 2026 Parents will report through the feedback form that they are happy with the EHC plan and the advice received	

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2a	Enhance the partnership's ability to evaluate and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND by deepening its understanding of access to mental health services.	PC/ JA	Identify key metrics across children and young people's mental health provision and embed in the SEND & AP dashboard which will strengthen the partnerships capabilities to evaluate and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND	2	Sep-26		The SEND & AP data dashboard will support stronger governance that aids oversight, tracking and assurance of the experience of children and young people and performance against key metrics. The mental health metrics will go live in the SEND & AP Dashboard from September 2026
			Develop a robust system for collecting and analysing accurate data on children and young people's mental health provision including waiting times and referral volumes across all areas of Cumberland, including border regions where children and young people may access services beyond the partnership footprint.	2	Sep-26		Regular Impact analysis reports will provide assurance and oversight to the partnership board. The mental health metrics will go live in the SEND & AP Dashboard from September 2026
			The Joint Commissioning group will use the relevant data to deliver ongoing analysis of service offer equity, variation and impact across Cumberland and provide updates on progress to the SEND partnership board.	1	Dec-26		The joint commissioning group will have an established baseline which will support the analysis of trends, identify gaps in provision and areas of inequity and enable the group to begin to address any regional variation. Joint Commissioning Report will update the Board bimonthly from March 26.
			We will work in collaboration with our providers to identify needs early, support understanding of impact and mitigation of risk.	2	Dec-26		Risk reporting to the SENDAP Strategic Board is in place from March 26.

			Local offers will be reviewed to ensure provision across universal, targeted and specialist are visible to support graduated response to children and young people and their mental health needs	6	Jul-26		Evaluation data from the Emotional Wellbeing Single point of access pilot will show increased signposting and access to the Local Offer.
			Work with parents and carers to capture children and young people and family views of their experience through satisfaction surveys and qualitative feedback on whether services have met their needs.	1	Nov-26		Satisfactory survey's and qualitative data will provide evidence on children and young people's experience of accessing mental health provision across the graduated response and whether they received the right support in a timely manner.
Ref	Outcome	Lead	Specific Actions to Achieve Outcome	Strategy Priority	Expected completion date	R A G	Evidence of Outcome
2b	Embedding the newly developed programme of developmental checks for children and young people aged 5 to 19, so that there is a greater understanding of how effectively the programme is identifying the needs of children and	CK	Hold a 5-19 service development day with key stakeholders to establish the content and medium (face-to-face/virtual/digital) of assessment/intervention (for targeted/specialist delivery)	2	Jan-26		By March 2026 the uptake of 2-2.5 year developmental assessments will be increased to 90% across Cumberland.
			Utilise baseline data obtained through quarterly Health Care Professionals contract monitoring to identify and share relevant emergent themes with the SEND partnership.		Mar-26		
			An embedded programme of contacts for Children and Young People aged 5-19 on targeted and specialist pathways.				

	young people with SEND		<p>We will also share the following information with the Partnership:</p> <p>The number of children and young people signposted to the Neurodiversity and Emotional Wellbeing (NDEW) service pilot by the Cumberland 0-19 Health Care Professionals (HCP) Team</p> <p>The number of children and young people signposted to the Cumberland 0-19 HCP Team by the NDEW service pilot.</p>		Mar-26		
Ref	Outcome	Lead	Specific Actions to Achieve Outcome	Strategy Priority	Expected completion date	R A G	Evidence of Outcome
2c	Strengthen the partnership's ability to understand and respond to the impact of its work by making best use of existing data on attendance, exclusions, and suspensions to identify patterns that may indicate vulnerability among children	KN/ CB	Develop and implement a systematic approach to analysing attendance, exclusion, and suspension data across all education settings. Ensure this analysis is disaggregated by SEND status, phase of education, locality, and other relevant factors to spot emerging trends and potential areas of concern.	6	Feb-26		Performance will be reported through the SEND & AP Dashboard quarterly demonstrating the analysis of data
			Establishment of a core set of performance measures that can be extracted with ease from a data dashboard for SEND-related attendance and exclusion		Feb-26		Reduction in disproportionality between SEND and non-SEND pupils in exclusion/suspension data
			Use statistical methods to highlight significant differences or emerging concerns		Sep-26		Reduction in exclusion and suspension rates for children and young people with SEND (target: 10% reduction over 12 months).

	and young people with SEND.		Develop an Annual review of the data system and indicators based on feedback and evolving need		Sep-26		Improvement in attendance rates for SEND pupils in identified priority areas (target: 5% increase over 12 months).
			Present insights to the SEND Partnership Board, school leaders, and LA teams with a clear action set to improve attendance, exclusions and suspensions for the next academic year		Quarterly		Report quarterly on attendance, exclusions and suspensions demonstrating progress on the key indicators above to the SEND & AP Partnership Board
Ref	Outcome	Lead	Specific Actions to Achieve Outcome	Strategy Priority	Expected completion date	RAG	Evidence of Outcome
2d	The partnership has a robust and embedded approach to evaluating the impact of its work, which informs strategic planning and drives continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people with SEND.		The local area partnership will develop a robust Data Dashboard that informs us of a range of impact measures relating to the SEND & AP Improvement plan.	6	Sep-26		Data suggests improved outcomes and experience for children, young people and their families.
			At every partnership board the local area will analyse data and ensure there is focus on the right planning at the right time to improve services for CYP.		Jul-26		
			The local area partnership will improve governance arrangements that are supported by an escalation process and risk register to ensure strategic outcomes are met		Jan-26		Risks are considered by each reporting group and considered at every board meeting from January 2026
			The partnership will provide strong communication to stakeholders including education settings, parent carers about the work completed in the local area following every board.	1	Dec-26		Monthly communication via an email bulletin to parents will begin in November 2025 From February in line with memorandum of understanding we will coproduce named activities in the next few months or number of activities in the next few months.

			To have a robust commissioning oversight of contracts and provider oversight at service level and individual level to help monitor delivery and impact on children and young people.		Jul-26		Providers will offer performance information to ensure impact on Children and Young People can be seen
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