



**Lancashire County Council SEND Partnership
Annual Report 2023**

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Introduction

Lancashire is committed to building a safe, happy, healthy, and successful future for all children, and particularly those with a disability and learning need. Lancashire has twelve districts, with 32,065 children and young people identified as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In December 2023, 10,765 children and young people have an education, health, and care plan (EHCP), a 19% increase compared with 2022.

This report sets out how services are delivered to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). In addition, the report details how children and their families are influencing and shaping how agencies/services work together so that Lancashire County Council and its partners continually improve the experiences and outcomes of children with SEND.

Role of the SEND Partnership Board

The SEND Partnership Board was formed in 2018, with a jointly funded permanent Manager of the SEND Partnership appointed to support the transition through significant change in structures, understand the implications of new national policy and in recognition of the continuous improvement required locally.

The SEND Partnership Board is accountable for the delivery of the SEND Continuous Improvement Plan to the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board, the Integrated Care Board and Lancashire County Council (LCC) Cabinet. This Plan includes actions to address key priorities agreed by the SEND Partnership Board, which was reviewed as part of the continuous improvement plan. Key priorities have also been identified through annual surveys, and regular feedback from families and our partners.

Board members have acted as representatives for their sector, sharing their perspective, whilst engaging and keeping others informed. Progress on the actions in the plan have been monitored regularly and key elements reported to the SEND Partnership Board at each meeting.

Overall performance of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services have been reported via the Lancashire SEND data dashboard alongside the key performance indicators relating to statutory measures.

Chair of the SEND Partnership Board

Jacqui Old, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, Lancashire County Council and Julie Bell, Director of Education, Culture and Skills, Lancashire County Council, chaired the Board in 2023. Sarah O'Brien Chief Nursing Officer, Lancashire, and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board will chair the board in 2024.

Role of the SEND Partnership

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

Our Partnership brings together representatives from families, including the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) and young people's participation group (POWAR) with those organisations responsible for SEND services, including the county council, education, health, and social care providers. Through our work together we are committed to improving the support and provision for children and young people with SEND, and their families.

Structural changes have taken place across the health system. The Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) was formally established as a new statutory body on 1 July 2022, replacing the eight clinical commissioning groups across Lancashire and South Cumbria and continues to build on the successful work implemented by all our health and care organisations, over the last few years.

The SEND partnership, led by the Manager of the SEND Partnership, ensures consistent communication and coherent planning, continued monitoring of progress and support for children, young people, their families.

The SEND Plan 2021-2025

The priorities identified in the SEND Plan 2021-2025 are underpinned by the principle that services for children and their families are a priority, and the Lancashire SEND Partnership is committed to ensuring that service delivery provides the best possible outcomes and continued improvement.

The Lancashire SEND Partnership has aimed to achieve specific benefits for children and young people with SEND through working on the five priorities, described below. In delivering

these priorities, we have endeavored to identify, assess, meet needs, and improve outcomes through all that we do.

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

Priority Delivery Groups have been established to lead on action in the priority areas to continue to build upon the work taking place. The SEND Partnership Board has utilised existing structures and established task groups as needed to deliver the improvement, with the involvement of all partners. Highlight reports are provided by each group to the meetings of the SEND Partnership Board, to report on progress against agreed actions in delivering the priorities.

The five SEND plan priority delivery groups.

1. Improving Outcomes led by Sally Richardson, Head of Inclusion, Lancashire County Council.

Half termly multi-agency meetings have explored data trends and analysis has identified key themes. Health, public health, and social care data identified speech and language requirements in children with SEND, who were open to Children's Social Care, and supported an integrated approach to supporting these children. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has approved the roll out of the Speech and Language Balanced System model of support, across East Lancashire in 2023 and all Lancashire in 2024. Educational Psychology, Portage and

Specialist Teaching Service are joining the multi-disciplinary drop-in sessions that have been piloted in Hyndburn, and successfully reduced the waiting list from forty to two weeks.

Data has been shared with schools via primary heads in Lancashire (PHiL) and Lancashire association of secondary school headteachers (LASSH) meetings, with reference groups being established to develop thinking about how to narrow attainment gap and move towards more collective decision making. Data in 2022 was disappointing but benchmarking data in 2023 is showing slight improvements. Education Improvement school visits have included a focus on SEND, building on the work of the primary headteacher's reference group, and inclusion summits have been held, to listen to the challenges faced by schools and to explore new ways of working to promote inclusive practice.

A systematic approach to feedback has been established. Quarterly reports written by the Inclusion Communication and Engagement Manager, have explored the number of complaints, mediation requests and tribunals in relation to the number of requests for education, health, and care needs assessments (EHCNA). Although the numbers of complaints, mediation requests and tribunals have increased (600), this is in line with the number of EHCNA requests increasing (2988 in the last 12 months). The SEND data dashboard has been updated and includes data from education, health, public health, social care, and preparation for adulthood. Increasing demand has meant that timeliness has slipped with 37.3% EHCP's finalised within timescales in 2023. A helpline has been established in October 2023 and a Correspondence Officer is being appointed, to help manage enquiries and demand. Since the implementation of the helpline, complaints have decreased slightly.

Education, health, and care plan (EHCP) annual review survey responses were collated for 2022 with 80% parent carers feeling that they were listened to and 73% that actions would be taken to resolve their concerns. The response rate declined between February and April 2023 with 68% parent carers feeling listened to. Between April and July 2023 no annual review survey responses were completed, but in July 2023, the SEND Survey was launched to gather feedback from children, young people with SEND, and their parent carers. Consequently, the SEND survey replaced the EHCP Annual Review survey from September 2023.

678 responses were received from parent carers in July (571) and August (107), 2023, with an average of 339 per month. 20% of children were age 11-12 with 68% male and 60% having communication and interaction as primary category of need. 33% of children and young people had an education, health, and care plan (EHCP), 32% an individualised education / learning plan (IEP/ILP), 20% no plan and 15% either a health, social care, early help, risk management plan or not sure. Most parent carers (64%) felt they and their child were involved in the assessments completed by services. This increased to 77% when a child had an education, health, and care plan (EHCP), and 76% when they had an IEP/ILP. 49% of all parent carers felt they were listened to; however, this rose to 50% for those with an EHCP,

and 58% with an IEP/ ILP. 58% of parent carers strongly agreed or agreed that their child could make their own choices and decisions (62% with an IEP/ILP). 51% felt that their child has the support they need at school, college or work to do their best, rising to 55% if they had an EHCP, and 60% with an IEP/ILP.

Children with SEND are at an increased risk of being excluded, not attending school, and achieving lower attainment than children without SEN needs. The voice of children permanently excluded have been captured by the Children's Champions, and there are further plans to capture the voice of children and young people who are post 16 and not in education, employment, or training. Working groups have been established to manage exclusions and a new 'PEN 1' form has been developed, to ensure children have received the right support, at the right time prior to being permanently excluded. There has also been a review and finalisation of a three-year inclusion strategy, with inclusion hubs being developed to promote inclusion and reduce exclusions.

The Alternative Provision strategy 2023-26 has been revised, finalised, approved by councillors, and published in July 2023. The strategy aims to improve outcomes for children who are unable to attend mainstream school or are at risk of exclusion. County Councillor Jayne Rear, cabinet member for Education and Skills, said: "Our Alternative Provision Strategy aims to ensure all children and young people access quality learning from childhood through to adulthood in the right place, at the right time. Our outreach first approach means we can tailor our support, whether that is providing targeted support in mainstream schools or arranging placements to help children and young people to develop the skills and confidence they need to continue learning and thriving in our county. We hope that the Alternative Provision Strategy helps us to realise our vision; that children and young people achieve their full potential in education, learning and future employment."

The Workforce Development Strategy has been updated and a multi-agency working group established. There are plans for quarterly network meetings, half day workshops and annual SEND Briefings, for all partners; led by the manager of the SEND partnership, the Family Hubs SEND enabler and early help learning and development officer, to increase the knowledge and confidence of all practitioners working with children and young people who have SEND. School Readiness has been supported by the Marie Gascoigne Balanced System graduated response and Wellcomm training has been offered to schools; both are speech and language service initiatives to increase access to services and skills of practitioners. The specialist teaching service and Lancashire professional development service (LPDS) deliver bespoke training and a wide variety of courses, to help increase schools confidence at meeting the needs of children with SEND. Support has been provided to schools via the special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinator (SENDSCO) and behaviour network meetings, inclusion hub meetings, and via the inclusion and engagement team for children receiving SEN support, in addition to children with an EHCP.

The Virtual Schools trauma informed training programme has been accessed by 165 schools and further education colleges, and an attachment and trauma tool kit has been developed and rolled out. The May 2023 census showed that Lancashire had 180,610 pupils at 628 schools, with 32500 pupils (18%) attending school less than 90% and 6500 (4%) attending 50% of the time. Training on emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) has been made available to schools via an on-demand webinar. Training is also provided on the ATTEND framework to all schools and national health service (NHS) colleagues. Termly coaching sessions are also available, and a parental guidance handbook has been developed. The psychology team worked with the Department for Education to produce a webinar and guidance document, and a reducing anxiety conference was held in October 2023 to help reduce the number of children struggling to attend school.

Parent carers when asked by the Local Offer requested that practitioners were more confident at understanding how conditions impacted their children, so a SEN Support Guide and webpage, was developed to illustrate how educational, emotional, and early support combine to provide holistic support for the child based on needs. An SEN reference guide was also created to help schools review their SEND provision and a directory is also being developed so schools can support one another.

2. Communications led by Sam Jones, Chair of the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum and Jenny Ashton, Manager of the SEND Partnership, Lancashire County Council.

Lancashire parent carer forum (LPCF) co-produced the updated Working Together Strategy 2023-2026, which is published and out for feedback. The strategy includes what the strategy is, the background, what we mean by working together, why we need a strategy, what the SEND partnership is and who is involved, mirroring the SEND Plan 2021-25, vision, and values. The strategy outlines what the Local Offer is, what the Graduated Response is and how it links with Early Help, providing SEN support to families. The strategy explains what communication is, how we communicate with partners, including face to face, through co-production individually, operationally, and strategically, about the 5 priority groups and how children, young people and parent carers can participate. The strategy concludes with how we measure success. Feedback has been positive; that the strategy flows better and reflects the SEND plan better.

Monthly priority group meetings have been held and task and finish groups established to develop the communication delivery plan, to plan engagement events, and to improve the SEN support webpage, which will help practitioners implement holistic support, including

educational support via the graduated response, emotional support, including emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), and early help / social care support. This was in response to parent carers expressing a wish on the Local Offer, that schools understood how specific conditions impacted their children, and from additional feedback which highlighted a need for workforce development.

Lancashire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) were supported by Contact and the SEND Partnership to grow their membership and improve their capacity. The forum have doubled their membership and steering group, have set up a development group and completed a development plan. Our Designated Social Care Officer has been supporting with strategies and the participation and engagement protocol / memorandum of understanding which highlights a more reciprocal relationship. Three 'Working Together' events were co-produced and co-delivered in July and again in December 2023, capturing parent carer feedback to help develop and shape future services. The top themes identified when asked what needs to improve, included communication and information sharing, workforce development and support for schools. These sessions will be held termly moving forward and will feedback the findings from the previous sessions and update attendees as to actions taken in each of the priority delivery groups to address the feedback.

The children and young people (CYP) participation strategy was launched in February 2023 by our Youth Policy Strategic Lead, and the youth participation members. All education and children's services teams have completed a self-assessment and produced an action plan, detailing how they will implement participation. The SEND Partnership have prioritised establishing a participation, engagement and co-production group, staff to receive training on participation, and to explore how the Mind of My Own app can be implemented in inclusion to gain children's and young people's voices.

POWAR voiced to the SEND leads at a meeting in March that they wanted more face-to-face opportunities, including an annual take over day, information to be provided in an easy-to-understand format and plenty of time to digest the information. The young people also requested to speak first at the meeting if they had an agenda item, to help reduce their nerves. The SEND Partnership has implemented most of the requests made by POWAR, and easy read documents will be co-produced once the widgit software has been installed, leisure facilities are being explored through Max Cards and Active Lancashire, and improved accessible transport through Dial a Ride, and Ring and Ride services. A task and finish group is being established to ensure these actions are progressed. POWAR members and children and young people met with Executive Leaders of the council during early December, to share their 'lived experiences' of what it is like to grow up and live in Lancashire.

The communications priority group have been working to ensure the Local Offer is improved, and regularly updated with 'what's new' and 'You Said...We did' articles. Updates have been made to the SEND Directory based on parent carer feedback and requests made to

organisations to add their details. In response to 'You Said...We Did', the SEND Partnership delivered twenty-four engagement events across all twelve districts from August 2022 to August 2023. 575 parent carers, children, and young people (293) and practitioners (284) attended the events, with positive feedback received from parent carers as to how much support and activities are available. The top five most attended events were in south and central Lancashire and the top themes identified included: parent carers wanting to be heard, the SEND Partnership to be more transparent, a more knowledgeable and confident workforce, more support and activities for families, and more support for schools. The events have been evaluated and the learning used to plan the next engagement programme.

The SEND Partnership also attended the Preston SEND Early Help event organised by child and family wellbeing (CFW) for 60 school SENDCO's and health practitioners in April 2023, the Family Hubs launch events in September 2023, the Chorley Council parent event in September 2023 and the Jake Berry MP for Rossendale SEN and Autism support fair in October 2023. We have also attended Primary Heads in Lancashire, Lancashire Association of Secondary School Headteacher, and Chorley Heads in Partnership meetings, in addition to the district 4 Inclusion Hub conference, School Safeguarding children with SEND course and the School Safeguarding conference.

3. Improving the SEND Journey led by Lesley Anderson-Hadley, Associate Director for SEND, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Several groups feed into the improving the SEND journey priority, so there is no priority delivery group. The groups include the multi-agency audit group, the children and young people autism projects oversight steering group, the early identification of need working group, best start in life and logic model working groups, the early health notification, and public health 0-19 groups. The ICB associate director for SEND, and LCC head of inclusion have also collaborated to meet requirements for the new SEND Inspection Framework.

Multi-agency audit and evaluation, introduced in Summer 2023, and held half-termly, further strengthened our quality assurance activity and provide a more in-depth analysis of the impact of our SEND arrangements on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people (CYP). This enables us to focus on individual CYP and families and identify how we have worked across the partnership to support them. This process is now embedded across the SEND Partnership. Findings are collated and shared to support ongoing service development and change. EHCP audits are held monthly and focus on the content and quality of individual EHCP's. Auditors receive training in relation to the Quality Standards and how to make judgements. EHCP audits seek to evidence of compliance with statutory legislation and the

Code of Practice, a coordinated and effective multi-agency footprint and improved outcomes for the child or young person. Learning from EHCP audit is disseminated to inform improvement, celebrate good practice, and contribute to the continuous professional development of the workforce. The quality of EHC plans graded as good or outstanding has improved from 45% in 2020 to 67% in 2023. For new plans this is 75% in 2023 and 41% for amended plans.

A logic model for school readiness was approved, identifying the areas required to ensure the best start in life – the first 1001 days of life. The best start in life group meets 6 weekly and is chaired by the Director of Public Health, and reports to the children, young people and families partnership and other strategic boards. The aim is to provide strategic direction and leadership to reduce inequalities in health and support babies, children, young people, and their families to stay healthy, improving health and wellbeing using a system approach, ensuring that support for children with SEND is included in all these areas.

The early identification of need has been supported by representatives from the 0-19 service, public health, inclusion, school improvement, and early help and an action plan has been implemented. A comprehensive systems approach to early years providers has supported increased inclusion, and a new inclusion fund developed to shorten the process when a child is already known to the specialist teaching service. Support has been provided to partners to implement the graduated approach and utilise the ordinarily available toolkit and quick reference guide. SENDCO Networks have been supported and the training programme for education providers extended considerably.

The early health notification pathway from universal services such as health visiting and school nursing through to targeted services including paediatricians and early help practitioners, has been reviewed in 2023, and embedded in the 0-19 service to improve processes, support and what a good referral looks like. A SEND CFW support team were created in 2023 with seven members in the team, who support children and young people open to the children with disabilities team who do not meet the threshold for a social worker. The service is being extended to include support for children post 16, the management of break times and completion of care advice.

The supporting medical needs of pupils in special schools guidance was updated early in 2023 following consultation with parents and provides clarification around the roles and responsibilities of the different professions within settings. The guidance outlines what special school nurses offer, including appropriate and up to date training for teaching

assistants and other special school staff It details how schools should be recording storage and administration of medication, providing a clear outline of parental and school responsibilities, including responsibilities of staff on school trips and residential.

There is a position statement on the neurodevelopment pathway implementation, with the autism pathway being reviewed, and the NICHE report completed with recommendations. The original pathway was co-produced by Dr Maria Hall and devolved to the eight clinical commissioning groups who all interpreted it differently. The ICB brought all the teams together across the whole patch in 2023 to update the neurodevelopment pathway to improve consistency and equity and to develop an action plan. Support needs have been reviewed and navigators appointed whilst children and young people are waiting for assessment.

The autism in schools project has received funding for the third year and aims to promote positive autism support and practice in schools, to improve inclusive, multi-agency approaches and support for families and improving the quality of life for children, young people following autism diagnosis. Year one of the autism in school project commenced in September 2021 with an initial cohort of schools. Year two saw an additional enhanced offer to schools across Lancashire and South Cumbria. The project provided training and awareness to enhance joined up person-centred planning delivered through networking events, communities of practice and relationship building for parent carers and the schools. Support was provided to schools around key transitions and training to support reasonable adjustments within the classroom. Termly visits were carried out by the autism lead to facilitate bespoke support and in April 2023 an environmental audit, coffee mornings and online autism awareness training was implemented as part of an enhanced support offer with 31 schools participating in this offer. A digital platform was developed within Year two of the project with a library of training materials, and will go live in year three, forming part of the training offer for Year three, with access being monitored to track download and viewing.

The annual review working group have reviewed and updated processes following an audit with children, young people and parent carers who wanted forms to be more accessible and meaningful regarding measuring progress made against identified targets. The working group has updated the forms for CYP, parent carers, and professionals in health, and care. There is also an easy read children's and young people's form with widgit symbols, new guidance notes and flowcharts following a trial in 2023 with 58 School SENDCO's. The new forms and process are being launched at a webinar in December, followed by a 12 month pilot and evaluation process.

4. Preparation for Adulthood led by Neil Willcocks, Service Manager for Learning Disabilities Autism and Mental Health, Lancashire County Council.

Monthly meetings have been held with partners, with membership being reviewed to ensure the correct partners are represented. Primary and secondary school representation would be welcome, and invitations have been sent requesting representation. Preparation for adulthood data including post 16 attainment, post 19 attainment, employment, accommodation, destinations, and participation which has been added to the SEND data dashboard.

The pathway guide is due to be published on the local offer and has been completed for several areas, including education, health, and care plan (EHCP), early years, primary, secondary, post 16 education, traineeships, apprenticeships, employment, adult social care, and housing. The pathway guide for health information is currently being reviewed but when completed the pathway guide can go live on the local offer. A commissioning statement has been completed and quality measures developed to prioritise employment, independent living, community inclusion and health, including increasing the number of children with a learning disability on the GP learning disability register and able to access annual health checks.

A Transitions manager and social workers have been appointed to the transitions team. The transitions policy detailing the transition process to adult services has been finalised and published, following sign off from cabinet. The transport policy for young people age 16+ has been developed but is being revised for young people who are age 19+. The policy will go out for consultation before being finalised. A preparation for adulthood audit developed by the council for disabled children (CDC) has been completed by partners, and an action plan of priorities developed. A thematic audit of Preparation for Adulthood was carried out in July 2023, and indicated that work needs to be done to ensure that young people with an education, health, and care plan (EHCP), are supported towards greater independence and employability.

The new employment forum was launched in September 2023 and an action plan developed to drive forward post 16 options including supported internships. The plan nationally is to double the number of supported internships available by 2025, as everyone deserves the right to aspire to the very best future, yet only 4.8% of people in England (and 4.1% of people in Scotland) with a learning disability, who are known to local authorities go on to secure paid

employment, compared to 80% of their peers. Funding was applied for by DFN (David Forbes-Nixon) project search to help co-ordinate training and opportunities for supported internships. The national development team for inclusion (NDTi) work in partnership with DFN project search and the British association of supported employment (BASE), providing support and challenge to Lancashire's employment forum. There are currently six supported internship partnerships in Lancashire, including Lancaster Hospital, Preston Hospital, Calico, Progress Housing, Lancashire Police, and the Local Authority. Wherever possible, the young people are supported to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. The take up of the places need improving, although the hospitals are both full for next year. Project Search have also won another bid as an information provider for supported internships, including the quality assurance framework to support other providers joining the scheme. A development day was held in June 2023 to bring all the partners together, to improve working together. The employment forum will further develop, with the pace of this work improving considerably in January 2024, following the appointment of an employment officer as part of the supported internship programme. The employment officer will engage with all schools and colleges and embed the transition toolkit and additional funding to support children and young people through key transitions. The plan is to further develop an overarching forum to ensure alignment of integrated care board and local authority preparation for adulthood strategies.

5. Accessible Services led by Dave Carr, Director of Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health, Lancashire County Council.

The North West Region is re-designing the children's and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS), with links needing to be strengthened, and surveys being completed to gather feedback. There are variable wait times across the county for CAMHS with 98% children and young people seen within four weeks in East Lancashire, compared to 52% across the Lancashire and South Cumbria foundation trust (LSCFT) footprint.

There is a joining up of mental health support across the county, including additional mental health support teams, which currently cover 50% of schools (above the national target), and support via We are With You around self-harm. The digital platform Kooth has provided self-help and online access to counselling, with 5,300 children supported in 2022/23, and was extended to colleges this year, with 90% sharing it was a useful source of support. Over 30,000 children accessed support from NHS funded services in 12 months, which is above the national access target. NHS Risk Support Liaison Workers have been established, who are working with Children's Social Care to improve support for children with complex needs.

Procurement of voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) emotional support services are underway to further improve access to early help services.

306 more special school places have been created this year, and further spaces have been identified, with schools being invited to submit expressions of interest to manage the increasing demand. Post 16 and Alternative Provision procurement is live as part of the North West Regional Flexible Purchasing system to fill gaps in provision.

The Lancashire short breaks statement was updated for 2023/24 and provides information on the range of services and support available for children and young people with additional needs and /or disabilities. Short Breaks activities take place outside of school hours during daytime, evenings, weekends, and school holidays. Targeted short breaks are specific activities for children and young people with SEND who cannot access universal services without additional support. Lancashire has commissioned a range of targeted services and call this service 'Break Time'. 1300 children registered for the redesigned short breaks offer in the first year (2022) and feedback from a survey was that 89% parents said they would register for year 2 in 2023, with 1490 children registered. Registration for the third year opened in October 2023 for provision to start in the new financial year, and over 1500 children have been registered. Feedback from families is that there aren't enough break time providers, in all areas of Lancashire and the provision isn't meeting the needs of the children. However, the feedback received from families in the summer survey, whose children have attended has been very positive, with 85% strongly agreeing that the break time provider met their child's SEND requirements. 76% strongly agreed that their child enjoyed the activity, and 85% strongly agreed that the break provided benefitted the whole family. More providers are being contacted and more holiday and food (HAF) providers have been identified, however there will always be a limit in commissioned services as to what gets put in place and the providers who come forward.

Family Hubs launched in 2023, with co-production at Family Hubs level progressing, with user research being completed with parent carers and young people to capture their feedback at local level. A SEND Enabler was appointed in April 2023, and has been working with partners to ensure the offer to families who have a child or young person with SEND is comprehensive, and that the workforce are confident and knowledgeable.

Spotlight Projects 2023-24.

Morecambe Road School Phoenix Pathways

The need for special school places across Lancashire is significant and Morecambe Road school responded to a required expression of interest in January 2022 in creating a satellite unit. The benefits of the planned satellite unit were twofold; more places would be available on roll, and the outcomes for some of our existing cohort would improve. School was subject to formal and informal consultation processes in May/June 2022 resulting in an increase in commissioned numbers (155 to 189) and redesignation of the need of school from MLD to GLD. This came into effect in September 2022.

A group of Year 10 pupils were selected to be part of the Phoenix Pathways project, a collaboration between Morecambe Road School and Lancaster and Morecambe College. The pupils were taught by a Morecambe Road teacher (with specialist SEND experience) during morning sessions at college following a broadly formal curriculum. In the afternoon, pupils followed vocational courses taught by Lancaster and Morecambe college tutors. The pupils were continuously supported throughout by experienced Morecambe Road Teaching Assistants.

Pupils accessed a range of qualifications such as Entry Level Maths, English and Science via Morecambe Road and other Entry Level vocational courses via Lancaster and Morecambe College (LMC). The range of courses offered by LMC enabled the pupils not only to receive additional qualifications but also sample various subject areas to help with their decision making when applying to Lancaster and Morecambe College for Year 12.

Being part of Phoenix Pathways also helped the pupil's transition to Lancaster and Morecambe College after Year 11. Historically, transition has been a consistent issue for our Year 11 cohort due to several reasons including social anxiety, lack of progression opportunities, poor confidence, and social communication difficulties. Some of our children at this point would have been in school for twelve years and have never attended or experienced another educational provision. It was hoped that Phoenix Pathways would address some of these barriers.

In the first instance, the Phoenix group were given hoodies to wear by Morecambe Road School displaying a Phoenix logo to make sure they were easily recognisable in the college environment. However, the pupils now wear full non-uniform to allow them to move around the college without attracting attention. Over time, the Phoenix pupils became more resilient to other students which increased their confidence to access their break and lunchtimes without continuous adult support.

Phoenix Pathways helped develop the pupil's independence, with more pupils now choosing to travel to school independently. As the year progressed, there was a noticeable improvement in the pupil's self-confidence and maturity levels. In June 2023, Phoenix Pathways was visited by Ofsted during Morecambe Road's Section 8 monitoring visit. The concept was praised and an area for development identified in aligning curriculum intent and

progression from what the cohort had learned in Year 10 to what they would achieve in Year 11. From September 2023, Phoenix Pathways has two groups; the initial cohort who are now in Year 11, and a new Year 10 group.

Developing the Parent Carer Forum

Between October 2022 and the end of March 2023, the Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) worked with a Contact Associate, to develop the reach and sustainability of the Forum after COVID-19. We doubled our membership and recruited more parent carers to work with us. To join our membership database, go to our website: <https://www.lancashireparentcarerforum.org.uk> and sign up for information and opportunities to help shape services.

National NNPCF / Contact Conference 2023

At the end of February 2023, Lancashire parent carers were represented at the annual National Conference of the National Network of Parent Carers and Contact by two representatives. Our Chair, Sam Jones, discussed what should be ordinarily available across the country for children and young people with additional needs, with MP Claire Coutinho, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing). The Minister's responsibilities include SEND including high needs funding, alternative provision, children's social care, children in care, children in need and child protection, Adoption and care leavers, early years and childcare, family hubs and early childhood support, disadvantaged and vulnerable children, children, and young people's mental health.

LPCF Annual Event

In March 2023, the Parent Carer Forum held an annual event, which was well attended, and nine more parent carers were recruited to work with us and council and health practitioners to help shape services for our children, young people, and families.

Local SEND Events

LPCF are continuing to work with Lancashire SEND information, advice, and support service (SENDIAS) other parent carer support agencies, and practitioners from across the SEND Partnership to bring local SEND events to each district in Lancashire.

Children and Young People's Participation Strategy Launch

A new strategy outlining how children and young people will be supported to participate in decisions and services that affect them was launched at County Hall, Preston on 17 February 2023.

The Children and Young People's Participation Strategy applies to all children and young people in Lancashire and talks about best practice in terms of how they are involved in decisions that affect their own lives, all the way up to supporting how services develop strategically to benefit others in the future.

The strategy has been written with children and young people and with staff who work across a variety of different services. The Launch event was presented by young people from

Lancashire Youth Council, LINX, the Children in Care Council and the Care Leaver Forum as well as POWAR, the SEND Forum for children and young people in Lancashire. It introduced a model of participation called the Lundy Model and we spent time getting creative and exploring what that model means in different circumstances and settings.

To find out more about the strategy and how children and young people could get involved in POWAR, please go to: www.lancashire.gov.uk/childreducation-families/children-and-young-peoplesparticipation Or you can follow us on Twitter @LancsCYPVoice

Widgit InPrint 3 software

Young people from POWAR, the participation forum for young people with SEND, as part of the EHCP Annual Review process, expressed that the use of 'Widgit' as a tool for improved communication should be explored across the organisations within the SEND Partnership, and particularly within Lancashire County Council Children's and Education Directorate to diversify and support practice. Widgit Symbols and software are used in a wide range of locations, to support communication, education and understanding. The tools offer the opportunity to create bespoke, consistent and meaningful resources that support individuals with different styles of communication and understanding to better interact with our services and their plans of support. Senior Managers agreed and Digital Services purchased the InPrint 3 software for an initial pilot year in October 2023, so we can evaluate the impact of this tool on practice.

POWAR Take Over Day

On August 1st, POWAR hosted the Young People's Takeover of the SEND Partnership Board. The Takeover Day, the first event of its kind, gave passionate and perceptive young people with SEND experience a chance to express themselves and be heard collectively. The day's purpose was to engage in honest, open dialogue with the SEND Partnership Board. More importantly, it was an opportunity to discuss the realm of possibilities and limitations, ensuring that decisionmakers genuinely value and seriously consider the views of the young people. The Takeover Day event at UCLAN was more than just a simple boardroom meeting. It was a workshop wholly designed and facilitated by young people attending POWAR.

Through creative activity and conversations, young people and professionals explored what the five priorities meant to professionals on the SEND Partnership Board. The results were then compared to a broader consultation that young people from POWAR had designed, the results of which were shared on Takeover Day and included the voice of young people from across Lancashire. Professionals committed to the three priorities that the SEND Partnership Board should work on, and young people committed to three priorities they would work on for the next 12 months. A special note of appreciation to Oliver Moores and Evie Ball for being great presenters on the Takeover Day and showcasing their advocacy skills and passion for improving the lives of young people with SEND.

Marie Gascoigne Balanced System for speech, language, and communication needs

In November 2022 a launch event titled "**The Balanced System: Better Communication**" was held. The event launched the work commissioned by Lancashire Local Authority and the NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, to complete a comprehensive assessment of Speech, Language and Communication need across Lancashire using the Balanced System® Framework.

This framework identified how a whole system approach can improve outcomes for children and young people and inform improvement plans. The event included an overview of the Balanced System® Framework, next steps for this work in Lancashire and opportunities for stakeholder involvement.

Strategic level colleagues across health, care and education including commissioners, clinical leads for Children's Services, Speech and Language Therapy Leads, Headteachers, and partners in the voluntary community and social enterprise sector attended the launch.

A speech and language therapy drop in pilot was set up in Hyndburn in partnership with Child and family wellbeing chat, play, read and support from the health visitor. This has significantly improved access, reducing the waiting list from forty to two weeks.

Supported Internships

Supported Internships are for people aged 16 to 24 with learning difficulties or disabilities, who have an education, health, and care plan (EHCP) and need extra help to get a job. DFN Project SEARCH is a supported internship programme, committed to transforming the lives of young people with learning disabilities and autism. DFN Project search has been awarded a government contract from the Department for Education, as part of a consortium working in partnership with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) and British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) to double the number of supported internships to 4,500 per year in England by March 2025.

It is a full academic year supported internship programme to help young people prepare for employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning and work experience placements at the host business.

DFN Project SEARCH is a partnership between a host business, an education partner, and a supported employment partner:

- A host business who provides work experience placements and a classroom.
- An education partner who provides a tutor who delivers the employability curriculum.

- A supported employment partner who provides an employability coach in the workplace and a follow-on employability coach after the programme ends.
- Lancashire County Council who acts as a license holder to ensure the provision is accessible to across Lancashire.
- The Department for Work and Pensions provide 'Access to Work' funding.

The young person takes part in three work experience placements to build their skills and develop a career path. Alongside their time at the host business, they complete a person-centred study programme in employability and independent-living skills, which together with support from their families/carers, will set SMART targets towards employment, independent living, social and good health outcomes, enabling the young person to make a successful transition from education to employment and adult life. There has been positive feedback and outcomes coming through about employment, following supported internship placements, with 70% of project search graduates gaining employment.

Family Hubs

Family Hubs officially launched in Lancashire in September 2023 across ten districts, and soft launched in two. Family hubs work with a large network of local partners including NHS, district councils, schools, libraries, the police and voluntary, community and faith-based organisations. Together, we work closely with children, young people, and families to provide the information, advice and support they need in one place.

Family hubs work with several core delivery partners to ensure high quality services are delivered including midwife and health visitor appointments, groups for expectant mums and dads, mental health counselling for families, baby feeding advice and SEND support groups and advice.

The Family Hub network are made up of Family Hubs and Family Centres. Family Hubs will offer the same services in every district, while Family Centres will offer some more specialist services, including mental health partners.

Challenges

Priority Group 1:

- EHC requests have increased by 53% since 2020, with complaints and tribunals subsequently increasing.
- Timeliness for assessments being completed on time has been impacted from 60% to below 40% with a recovery plan being put in place.
- Permanent exclusion rates continue to place considerable pressure on alternative provision, despite an increase in provision from 812 places to 851.
- Increasing demand for Special School places continues, despite the creation of 306 more places since 2021.
- Children not attending school due to EBSA and other reasons, remains challenging.

Priority Group 2:

- The Working Together Strategy only applies to the Lancashire SEND Partnership and we don't have an overall, inclusive participation strategy for all services.
- The large size of Lancashire and its division into 12 districts means that our parent carers can be very far from each other which can mean that it is difficult to meet up and make sure that all voices are heard.
- Increasing inclusivity and diversity of The Local Offer remains challenging.
- It takes time and effort to establish relationships and develop a shared understanding including co-production.

Priority Group 3:

- Waiting times for Neuro-Development assessment continue to be challenging.
- Rollout of the Balanced System for Speech and Language requires development of local relationships and ways of working. Pace of change not as quick as we would wish.
- Working relationships to be established and further developed to improve working together and co-production.
- Capacity of ICB leads, Designated Clinical Officers and the project management team remains limited.

Priority Group 4:

- The Preparation for Adulthood group would benefit from greater engagement from school leads, which continues to be a challenge.
- Health information for the preparation for adulthood (PfA) pathway guide on the Local Offer is still outstanding.

Priority Group 5:

- Challenges in waiting times for CAMHS services – particularly in Central Lancs.
- Break Time provision doesn't meet needs in all parts of Lancashire. Not all parent carers have taken up allocated hours.

- Initial feedback from North West procurement indicates low number of Lancashire based Alternative Provision providers have been procured.
- Digital solutions linked to Family Hubs proving complex to fully implement at pace.

What's next?

Priority Group 1:

- Plans are in place to develop focus groups, building on the outcomes of the SEND survey.
- Co-production to gather insight into views of children and young people, who are in post-16 provision and those not accessing education in school.
- Use data from the follow-up survey with children who have attended alternative provision to inform service developments.
- Inclusion Hubs and Inclusion and Engagement Team to offer increased support to schools, to reduce exclusions in children who are receiving SEN support and those with EHCP's.

Priority Group 2:

- Lancashire parent carer forum (LPCF) and the youth participation lead will develop a coherent approach to engagement, in co-production with health and special educational needs and disabilities information, advice and support service (SENDIAS) colleagues.
- Lancashire Parent Carer Forum will continue to grow the membership database, so that opportunities to shape services can be communicated directly.
- A schedule to be developed requesting articles and good news stories to be shared in the SEND Newsletter, on the Local Offer website, Facebook page and via other methods of communication.

Priority Group 3:

- Implementation of the specialist school nursing review and levelling up continence services.
- Neuro-developmental (ND) Pathway Steering group to be implemented and action plans to be agreed.
- ND Pathway Options and pre and post diagnostic support to be implemented.
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust (LSCFT) review of therapy services, including further roll out of balanced system approach for speech and language therapy (SALT).
- Integrated Care Board (ICB) to work with the local authority and providers, to roll out the Balance System approach for SALT and a workshop is planned.

- Rollout of WellComm speech and language resources and development of local drop ins.

Priority Group 4:

- Develop schools cooperation and sharing of best practice.
- Further develop the Supported Internship offer.
- Consult on and publish Preparation for Adulthood Local Offer content.
- Further develop the Preparation for Adulthood data within the SEND data dashboard

Priority Group 5:

- Ongoing investment in mental health services, particularly at early help, and plans to reduce waiting times for CAMHS services in parts of Lancashire.
- Continued expansion of special school places and SEN units.
- Analysis of Break Time Survey to inform future plans.
- Review outcome of Alternative Provision to understand why there are few Lancashire providers and develop plan to secure more provision.
- Continued development of Family Hubs Networks and an inclusive offer.
- Development of Family Hubs directory of resources and Information Sharing Service.

Thank You

Thanks to parent carers, children, young people, councillors, partners, and all colleagues who have supported the SEND Partnership.