

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Team

Annual Report September 2024 – September 2025

Introduction

This report will cover Shropshire Telford and Wrekin and will focus on the activity undertaken by the ICB; whilst linking into the wider Local Area Partnership. The report will follow the academic working year to align with the wider SEND and Alternative Provision (SEND and AP) partnership. Please note this is the first annual report completed and therefore additional background information is provided to support reading and understanding.

Children and young people aged 0-25 years of age have a SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special education provision to be made. SEND is a priority for Shropshire Telford and Wrekin's Integrated Care Board (ICB), with 19.5% of CYP in Shropshire identified as having SEND, and 17.9% in Telford and Wrekin.

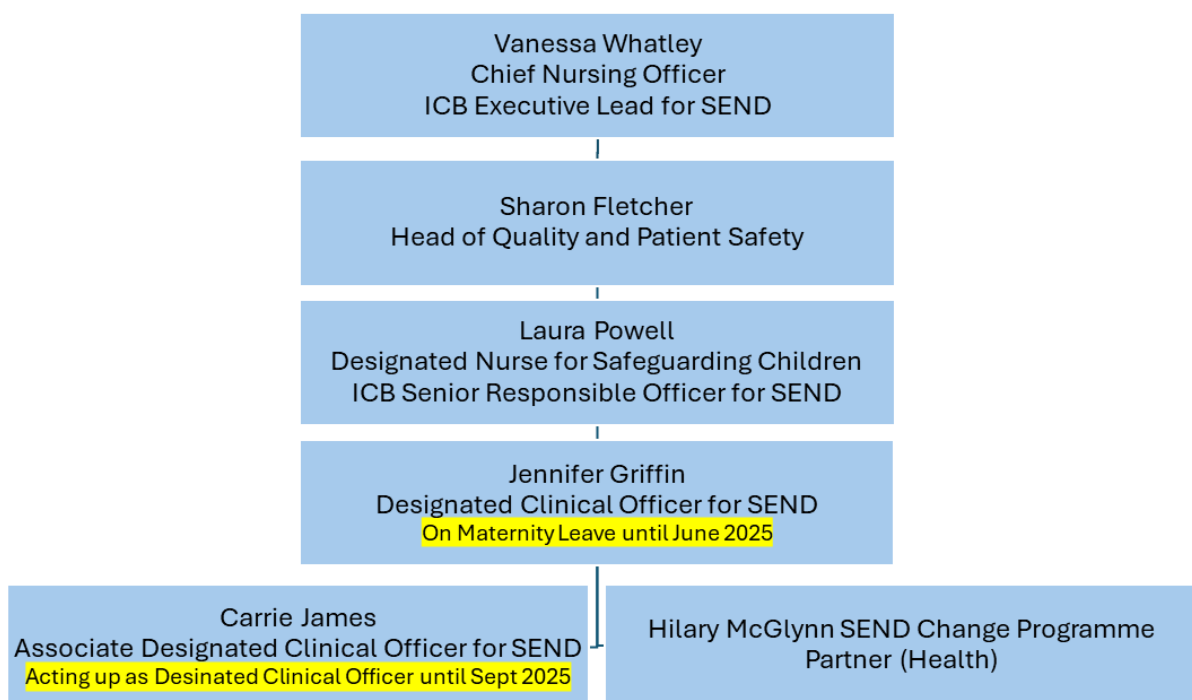
The Integrated Care System (ICS) enables greater integration across agencies and improved sharing of good practice and common solutions across Shropshire Telford and Wrekin. ICS partner agencies work closely together and have shared responsibility for outcomes for children, young people and families.

Integrated Care Boards' (ICBs) are obliged to commit to SEND through the following actions:

- STW ICB have a statutory obligation to address the needs of children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as specified in the SEND Code of Practice.
- STW ICB must consider how they will meet the needs of children and young people aged 0-25 and set this out in their forward plans.
- To effectively meet these needs, ICBs must collaborate with children's system leaders, families, and other relevant stakeholders to develop comprehensive strategies.
- STW ICB is required to provide a designate Executive Lead for SEND, ensuring clear accountability and the efficient delivery of support services (Vanessa Whatley, Chief Nursing Officer).
- STW ICB should prioritise the development of a leadership team with a diverse range of skills, ensuring that there is adequate knowledge and expertise in areas related to children and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

- STW ICB is required to demonstrate compliance with their statutory obligations concerning Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in their annual reports.

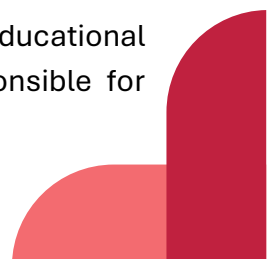
Since April 2024 there have been changes to the ICB SEND team. The current structure is as follows:



The current Designated Clinical Officer for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) assumed the role in February 2021, while the Associate Designated Clinical Officer began in May 2023. From June 2024 to September 2025, the Associate DCO acted up to cover the DCO’s maternity leave, with additional time for the transition period. Additionally, a SEND Change Programme Partner for health was successfully recruited and commenced post in September 2024, working at 0.6 full-time equivalent. However, there was no replacement for the Associate DCO position during the maternity cover period.

ICB SEND functions

ICBs play a vital role in supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) through various functions. They are responsible for



commissioning services collaboratively for those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and work closely with local authorities to enhance the Local Offer and fill any gaps in local services. Additionally, ICBs facilitate the integrated EHC needs assessment process by ensuring that practitioners and clinicians are actively involved. They also manage the agreement of Personal Health Budgets for eligible children and young people with EHCPs. Furthermore, ICBs create a five-year Forward Plan aimed at addressing the needs of all children with SEND within their Integrated Care System (ICS) area. These responsibilities are essential for providing the necessary support and services to meet the educational, health, and social care needs of this population. Further to this, the ICB SEND team are required to deliver on a range of broader functions as set in [Designated Clinical Officer for SEND Handbook](#). These functions are described as pillars of the role and include

- Pillar 1: Advisory role for the whole health system
- Pillar 2: Strategy and Leadership role across the SEND partnership
- Pillar 3: Governance, Policy and Practice
- Pillar 4: Managing Relationships and Connections across the SEND partnership

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice emphasises the importance of having a Designated Medical/Clinical Officer to assist Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in fulfilling their legal obligations. This includes acting as key liaison for local partners when informing parents and local authorities about children and young people who may have special educational needs or disabilities, as well as providing guidance on these matters. The contributions of DCOs to the effective implementation of reforms have been acknowledged by various national bodies, including the Department for Education, the Department of Health, NHS England, and the Council for Disabled Children, which plays a crucial role in these reforms. Areas lacking a DCO or facing capacity issues have faced scrutiny during local area SEND inspections conducted by OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Area SEND Inspection Framework

The current Area SEND Inspection Framework was devised jointly by OFSTED and CQC and implemented in 2023, then revised and updated in June 2025. The purpose of the SEND inspection framework is to

- evaluate the impact of the local area partnership's arrangements for children and young people with SEND
- provide information to help local area partnerships improve their arrangements for children and young people with SEND, and to support improvement of the SEND system as a whole

- ensure that information on the effectiveness of the local area partnership's SEND arrangements is available to children and young people with SEND and their families, so they can make informed decisions about their education, health and care
- include an evaluation of the local authority's commissioning and oversight arrangements for children and young people in alternative provision; our reports include information on this, to help local authorities improve their arrangements
- provide information for the Secretary of State for Education, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and Parliament about the effectiveness of the local area partnership's SEND arrangements, to enable the government to act, if necessary; this information includes whether local area partnerships are working effectively to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

The SEND Inspection Model includes

- **full 3 week inspections**, which evaluate and report on the impact of the local area partnership's arrangements for children and young people with SEND.
- **monitoring inspections** of local areas that were identified as having widespread and/or systemic failings at their full inspection.
- **engagement meetings** between Ofsted, CQC and representatives of the local area partnership. The purpose of these meetings is for Ofsted, CQC and the local area partnership to discuss the partnership's self-evaluation, SEND action plan, any challenges, and how leaders are addressing them. These meetings do not result in an evaluative outcome
- **area SEND thematic visits** to a small number of areas, to investigate a particular aspect of the SEND system in depth.

Most recently Telford and Wrekin local area were inspected under the current inspection framework in March 2023. Inspectors found that the Local Area Partnership's arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and actions were being take where improvements were needed. Whilst there were strengths identified within the [report](#), there were areas for improvement noted that included leaders from the ICB to work closely with other partnership leaders to improve governance monitoring and oversight of diagnostic pathways including neurodevelopmental, mental health and speech and language therapy assessments. Furthermore, that partnership leaders should improve communication with families, beyond the formal consultation routes; sharing effective information and advice around provision available to children and young people with SEND. Based on the outcome of the 2023 inspection, Telford and Wrekin will receive a full inspection within 5 years of March 2023.

Shropshire most recently had a full local area SEND inspection in January 2020 under the previous SEND inspection regime. Whilst there were strengths identified within the

[report](#), it also raised significant concerns about the effectiveness of the local area and therefore were required to produce and submit a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to Ofsted that explained how Shropshire would tackle the areas of significant weakness. This included elements for the health system such as strategic leadership, inclusion of health services input into the SEND action plan, significant waiting times for ASD, ADHD and Speech and Language Therapy. It also identified the inconsistency in the quality of the input from education, health and care into EHC assessment and planning.

In November 2022, Shropshire underwent a follow-up [inspection revisit](#) that concentrated on the six key areas identified for improvement.

The assessment concluded that adequate progress had been achieved in several of these areas:

- inconsistent strategic leadership and weak strategic planning across the area, most notably in the CCG (now ICB), including the ineffective use of data to accurately commission and plan services
- The lack of inclusion of health services' input into the area's SEND action plan
- The high rate of exclusions for children and young people with an EHC plan and the high rate of repeat fixed-term exclusions for those receiving SEND support.

Insufficient progress was deemed to be made in the following areas:

- Significant wait times for large numbers of children and young people on the ASD and ADHD diagnostic pathways.
- Significant waiting times for those needing assessment and treatment from the speech and language therapy service.
- Inconsistency in the quality of input from education, health and care into EHC assessment and planning.

Following this the Local Area were required to develop an Accelerated Progress Plan to address these areas. The progress of this plan has been reviewed at 6 monthly intervals.

Since the last inspection, there has been significant progress across the system, a fact acknowledged in the biannual Accelerated Progress Plan Meetings conducted by NHSE and DfE. This report will provide further details regarding the activities undertaken. The Shropshire local area is expected to undergo inspection under the current framework in Autumn 2025 or Spring 2026.

Overview of activity

Change Programme Partnership

Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Local Areas in partnership with Herefordshire and Worcestershire Local Areas was selected as 1 of 9 sites for the SEND Change Programme initiatives in 2023. The SEND Change Programme has been developed in response to the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper in 2022, and the subsequent [SEND and AP Improvement Plan](#) published March 2023.

In 2023 – 2024, and continuing into 2024 - 2025, the SEND Change Programme focused on the following areas, with some shift in emphasis in 2024/25. Progress noted below:

- **Local Area SEND Partnerships** - both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin have established SEND Partnerships in line with change programme recommendations
- **Local Area Inclusion Plans (LAIPs)** - these plans amalgamated the SEND Self Evaluation Framework, SEND JSNA and SEND Strategy. The ICB team contributed to the completion of these in 2024 however LAIPs are no longer a requirement of the Change Programme with the focus shifted to inclusive practice (see below).
- **SEND & AP Dashboards** - work took place nationally to establish a consistent data dashboard however the health data included was limited and did not fully represent the needs of the SEND population. Work is ongoing locally to improve data dashboards – see reference below
- **EHCP reform** - multi agency panels, EHC Template, strengthening mediation and advisory tailored lists. The ICB team contributed to this testing process, however these areas are no longer being tested through the Change Programme
- **Alternative Provision** - including the multiagency workforce. The ICB have supported the development of the multiagency workforce. Recruitment issues resulted in a delay in establishing the Alternative Provision Specialist Task Force. A small workforce has been in place in both Telford and Shropshire since May 2025 which is planned to expand during 2025/26. In Telford a Neurodiversity Practitioner and Team manager have been appointed and in Shropshire an Occupational Therapist. These will be joined by mental health support workers, youth workers, family support workers and educational psychology support.
- **Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC)** - this initiative to support young children with speech language and communication needs (SLCN) has been effectively rolled out across pilot schools and nursery settings. The cross-discipline team led by a Principal SLT, supported by Specialist Teacher and Highly Specialist SLT in conjunction with High Level Teaching Assistant have delivered training, coaching and support to settings. The initial screening showed far more children needing support with their language development than expected but by the end of the year there have been significant improvements in communication skills for the vast majority of children involved in the programme. Other Impacts include a number of

children able to access a shorter assessment of their SLCN needs and receive an intervention in the setting which has enabled them to come off the SLT waiting list or remove the need to be referred for SLT. Staff in the setting were also surveyed about their confidence in supporting children with SLCN and at the start of the year 60% reported feeling confident but by the end of the year this had risen to 100%.

- **National standards** – this initiative has now been refocused by the national team to focus on Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision (OAIP), this is the concept that schools, settings and teams who support children should have a universal (also known as core or wave 1) offer of support which meets the needs of most children. Each local authority area has been mapping (or updating) their OAIP. Alongside this the ICB SEND team have developed a comprehensive resource explaining the OAIP provided by health services without the need for a referral to specialist services. This was completed in May 2025 and has been published on the [ICB website](#).

The change of government in July 2024 brought a variation in focus for the Change Programme. The new focus, outlined in the extension for 2025/26, is on the Local Inclusion Support Offer. The inclusion support offer aims to bridge the gap between mainstream settings and specialist tiers, enhancing the capability of mainstream settings to identify and meet needs and moving to a system where education settings will take more responsibility for SEND, equipped to provide a more inclusive and accessible offer. Areas of focus are:

- Training: Upskilling staff in targeted SEND approaches.
- Advice: Providing expert advice and support
- Direct Delivery: Delivering direct SEND support to children and young people (CYP)
- Multi-disciplinary Workforce: Includes specialist teachers, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, and potentially care, youth justice, and family support workers.

Alongside this new focus, the [Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools \(PINS\)](#), which ran as a separate pilot during 2024/25 has been extended to April 2026 and has been brought under the oversight of the Change Programme. This is a nationally funded pilot project for 2024/25, building on the success of the national Autism in Schools Project.

Strategic Leadership of the team across the SEND Partnership within the reporting period

- **Creating a data rich system** – It is acknowledged that data flow across partnership agencies is an area for development. The ICB SEND team have held a key role in manually sharing data from Contract Review Meetings with the SEND partnership, to share messages such as waiting times and ‘was not brought’ rates. The partnership committed to streamline the data flow to represent local activity and need by creating

a system wide data dashboard. Additional resource from the ICB Quality Analyst has enabled the development of a dashboard which represents health data relevant to SEND. Discussions are ongoing with local authority partners to develop a systemwide dashboard utilising Power-Bi systems. This system wide work has been delayed by recruitment within Telford LA, however as of September 2025 some additional capacity has been secured to move this forward.

- **Shropshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment** – an up to date draft JSNA has been completed, strongly influenced and supported by the ICB, which requires further refinement before publication to support efficiency of use.
- **Shropshire Self Evaluation Framework** – A review and update of the SEF has taken place and is currently awaiting further consideration of format from the partnership before finalisation.
- **Shropshire SEND Outcomes Framework**- the SEND ICB team have worked with colleagues across the system including Parent Carer forum and this document has now been [published](#)
- **Telford’s SEND Action Plan** – this drives the actions across the system. It should be noted that there is consistency in actions related to Neurodiversity and Speech, Language and Communication Needs.
- **SEND and AP Partnership Board Meetings and workstreams** - The team contribute to and progress action plans, risk registers and RAID logs in addition to presenting to the board. Shropshire’s boards are bimonthly and Telford and Wrekin’s take place termly.
- **NHS and DFE Keeping in Touch (KiT) Meetings** - for Shropshire these take place monthly and Telford & Wrekin quarterly. Furthermore, engagement meetings have been completed within this reporting period for each area the beginning of Q3.
- **Joint Commissioning** - During Q2, the joint commissioning workstream was re-established. The group have developed Terms of Reference and have a clear approach to co-production with parent carer forum representatives present in the workstream. Work is still underway to identify joint commissioning priorities and develop a joint commissioning strategy. This is a priority for both partnership boards.
- **Shropshire’s Accelerated Progress Plan 6 monthly Reviews** – The SEND team have contributed to the 18 month and 24-month review in partnership with health providers and the Local Authority. The 18 and 24 month reviews have highlighted the progress made but identified further recommendations which include; further oversight of the impact of ‘support whilst waiting’ initiatives, enhanced communication from the EHC Plan team, development of a robust commissioning strategy and delivery plan, adoption of ‘solution-focused’ co-production and further development of the SEND data dashboard. The 30-month review will take place in November 2025.



Service Improvements

Many children's services commissioned by the ICB specifically serve the SEND population, for example almost all CYP accessing CAMHS will require their school or setting to do something differently to meet their needs and similarly for Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Children's Community Nursing. Universal children's services such as the immunisation team and GPs will be required to provide reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of some CYP with SEND. The ICB SEND team have supported a range of improvements during 24/25, some key developments are listed below:

- **Support whilst waiting resources** - support resources are essential for the SEND community, providing specialised assistance tailored to the unique needs of each child. These resources are particularly beneficial for children and young people (CYP) with SEND who are awaiting assessment, as they help navigate the challenges of school and daily life. By offering this support, these resources can improve the overall experience for children and may reduce the need for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. The initiative to create resources for those waiting for appointments recognises the lengthy waiting lists faced by CYP with SEND and aims to inform families about available support during this period. Considerable efforts have been made to develop the [support whilst waiting for appointments](#) resource that encompass support from various partners for individuals awaiting assessments or health appointments, including a dedicated section on the Healthier Together website that addresses neurodiversity and speech, language, and communication needs across different age groups. Specific pages on the Healthier Together website have been developed for [neurodiversity support \(separate pages for different age groups\)](#) and [speech language and communication needs](#). The ICB SEND team have also supported the development of a [FAQ](#) for the BeeU Neurodevelopmental Assessment Service. Support whilst waiting resources have been positively recognised by DfE and NHSE during ongoing KIT meetings and APP reviews.
- **Contributions to Contract Review Meetings** - Monthly Contract Review Meetings for Shropshire Community Healthcare Trust and BeeU (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) are attended by the SRO for SEND, and latterly the DCO for SEND. The Planning and Performance Lead also attends these meetings and has been key in supporting with quality of the data received. It is acknowledged, there remain long waiting lists for Speech and Language and Neurodevelopmental assessments in addition to the increase in demand. We continue to work closely with service leads within these areas, and raised within CRM around recovery plans, trajectories and achieving a reduction of waits within these areas.
- **Contribution to the CAMHS procurement** – The team have contributed to and participated in CAMHS procurement process, ensuring learning from recent reviews, feedback from professionals, Parent Carers and current challenges influence the decisions for the new contract.

- **Service Specifications** - The team have contributed towards the Speech and Language Service Specification, CAMHS Pathway Mapping and model development including the development of the CAMHS and ND Service Specification. This is in addition to the 0-19 Service specification completed within Telford Local Authority extending the offer of SEND to young people aged 25 years of age. This work has enabled systemwide planning to support identification of need, early recognition and referral and resources to support a graduated response to intervention.
- **The SEND Health Operational Group** - This meeting is chaired by the DCO, meeting monthly to facilitate collaboration among Provider Service and SEND Leads. This forum serves as a platform for sharing best practices and local initiatives, while also providing an opportunity to discuss and escalate risks related to SEND, as well as acknowledging local and national priorities. The group is responsible for improving the quality of health advice for EHCPs and ensuring greater consistency across services.
- **Engagement in system wide workstreams** - SEND team members attend several system-wide workstreams including those focused on
 - Speech, Language and Communication Needs
 - Neurodiversity including tasks and finish groups on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Tics and Tourette's and more recently Supporting Sensory Needs
 - Mental Health Support Teams Governance
 - Early Years
 - Preparation for Adulthood
 - Co-production
 - Communication and Engagement
 - EHCP Quality
 - SEND Joint Commissioning
 - CYP Operational Delivery Group
 - LD ND Partnership Group
 - All Age Autism and ADHD Stakeholder Group
 - CYP Mental Health (recently established)
- **Position statements** - the ICB SEND team have developed position statements to help inform and clarify topics where queries frequently arise. The first two position statements have been uploaded to the [SEND page on the ICB website](#)
 - The Learning Disability Assessment Pathway (0-18) position statement outlines the difference between Learning disability and learning difficulties and explains how children are identified as having a learning disability.
 - The Position Statement on Sensory Processing Difficulties by the Children's Occupational Therapy Service draws upon a comprehensive review of the research evidence and represents the agreed position of Shropshire Community Health Trust.

Education, Health and Care Plans

Over 5% of CYP (0 – 25) in STW have an Education, Health and Care Plan which is a legally binding document which outlines a CYP's special educational, health and care needs, and the provision required to meet these needs. The ICB's duties with regards to EHCPs includes providing oversight and quality assurance processes to effectively fulfil the statutory responsibilities of the Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) regarding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This includes working with the partnership to adhere to timelines for Education, Health, and Care Plans, as well as conducting quality assessments and annual reviews. Additionally, ensuring meaningful co-production and engagement is crucial, particularly in collaboration with children and young people (CYP) with SEND, their families, and local parent carer forums. This approach ensures that the experiences related to SEND services are thoroughly understood and utilised to enhance service delivery.

The DCO and Associate DCO have played a vital role in EHCP panels across both local areas, assessing whether a child or young person (CYP) requires an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) needs assessment. Their involvement includes determining which health services should participate in the assessment process and determining with colleagues from the MDT if an EHCP should be issued. This contribution is crucial for ensuring that the health needs and services are accurately reflected in the CYP's EHCP.

Locally we are typically able to provide health advice for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA), this is provided by Community Paediatrics for children known and unknown to their service. The increase in applications for EHCPs has meant a significant increase in demands on the Community Paediatrics service to do this. For children undergoing an EHCNA whilst on a waiting list for a service such as SLT or Autism or ADHD assessments we note in the EHCP that any provision required from these services will be detailed at a later date following assessment. Whilst this statement does allow for signalling that further support may follow it does not robustly allow for details of all required provision in the CYP's initial EHCP. In other areas in the country, they have a more responsive approach to EHCPs whereby those going through a EHCNA have their referral expedited to ensure that relevant advice is provided to inform the EHCP. There are benefits and challenges to this approach, notable challenges being the potential for driving an increase in EHCPs to enable an expedited referral to SLT and Autism / ADHD assessments.

Both SCHAT and MPFTs contracts have been amended to include reference to include the following arrangements for SEND:

The service provider will work within the framework of the [SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25](#)
When a child is known to the service it will:

- Provide advice and information requested by the local authority within six weeks in relation to an EHC request.

- Provide advice which supports the development of outcome-based targets within the individual's Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP)
- Where the CYP is not previously known or is on a waiting list, a holding letter will be provided with potential time to be seen, noting that priority of being seen is via clinical need.
- Contribute to the processes to quality assure health provision set out in the EHCP's, this includes providing updates for annual reviews when requested and at least 6 weeks' notice is provided.
- Advice will be available up to one year post discharge from the service.

The DCO / Associate DCO have also been consistently involved in multiagency quality assurance to drive improved quality of EHCPs and Annual Reviews. The DCO has engaged in quality assurance (QA) initiatives concerning the health sections of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the contributions to Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs) for both Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin local authorities. In Shropshire a QA review focused on Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) was conducted in October 2024, resulting in several key recommendations. These included the creation of a model plan with updated PFA outcomes, the necessity for both internal and external training, and additional QA sessions targeting new and Year 9 plans, as well as early years reviews. The Quality Assurance Group (QAG) has prioritized this work, ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to implement these recommendations and facilitate future benchmarking across all EHCPs. Meanwhile, Telford and Wrekin held their EHCP QA meeting in November 2024, involving various professionals, including those from the Portage Service, to review plans and identify recommendations. Telford local authority are currently initiating their QA cascade process for 2025-26. The DCO has emphasised the importance of including health providers in the QA process, as this is a key element of learning for clinicians, the relevant contact details have been shared with each local authority area.

SEND Training Delivered to Health Providers

Training staff on Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA) is essential for providing effective support to children with special educational needs (SEND). Appropriately trained clinicians are better equipped to comprehend the requirements, actively participate in the assessment process, and develop individualised EHC plans that address specific needs. It is also vital for clinicians to grasp the principles of best practices when making and responding to health advice requests within the Education, Health, and Care plan framework. Understanding the necessary requirements and recommendations for achieving these best practices, along with the significance of self-assessment, is crucial for enhancing the overall effectiveness of the process.

The DCO function has successfully conducted training for health staff, including members from the 0-19 School Nursing Team in Telford, Diabetes Nurse Specialists, and colleagues from BeeU, resulting in the training of 67 health professionals during the reporting period. An evaluation form has been developed to support evidencing impact and the responses received in addition to an improvement noted in quality of health advice indicates this training and has influenced practice. Feedback is now sought following each training session. Initial feedback is as follows:

- When asked prior to the session, how confident they were in their duties around Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments / Plan's participants shared that they felt not so confident or not at all confident.
- Following the session, do you feel you now have a better understanding of your team's statutory duties? 100% said that they had a better understanding.
- 100 % of respondents felt that they now have more awareness of the support available from the Designated Clinical Officer to help them with future EHCNA requests or queries.
- 100% of respondents felt that the general discussion throughout the session was helpful and may support them in practice.

In addition to training, the DCO provides advice, support and supervision to health colleagues. This in turn supports educating around health advice thus impacting on quality.

Participation, engagement and co-production

The ICB SEND Team have initiated a quarterly meeting with both PACC and PODS over the past year. This meeting has given space for the Parent Carer Forums to raise any issues or concerns which aren't being addressed through established workstreams. The meetings have helped to develop the relationships between new members of the ICB SEND Team, for the most recent meeting and going forward ICB commissioning leads will also be invited to these meetings. In addition to this there are also regular meetings led by both Local Authorities with the Parent Carers Forums (PCFs) and the respective Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS) for both areas.

Coproduction is a key priority of the ICB SEND team and is advocated for and supported in all areas of work. The team have been part of the Seeing you, Seeing Me Exhibition launch, Coproduction Strategy launch (Shropshire) and Working Together for Parent Participation Event (T&W).

The ICB SEND Team have committed to increasing the consistency of co-production with Children and Young People with SEND in the coming year.

Continuing Professional Development

SEND related training has been undertaken by the team to further enhance skills set and expertise. This has included the NHSE 4 day SEND Collaborative Leadership Programme (for the SRO), best practice webinars, community of practice on needs led models for neurodiversity and attended SEND Dashboard webinars to contribute towards the development of the local dashboard being led on by the team.

Governance and reporting

The reporting period sits within the timeframe of changes within the ICB as part of the management of change that was undertaken and implemented from May 2024. This resulted in the Chief Nursing Officer being the Executive Lead for SEND and the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children (Telford & Wrekin place based) becoming the Senior Responsible Officer for SEND. This has strengthened the partnership arrangements and governance structures across the system, wider than SEND itself, supporting other agendas including; safeguarding, child death, LD&A and Mental Health. **Please see relevant governance structures in Appendix A.**

It is essential to ensure that the interdependencies related to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for individuals aged 0-25 are clearly aligned and visible within other NHS initiatives. This alignment should also be appropriately integrated into the governance structures of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), particularly in areas such as the transformation of services for children and young people, safeguarding, learning disabilities and autism, mental health, transition services, and children's continuing healthcare.

Team meetings are held monthly, providing an opportunity to share updates on ongoing projects and assess progress in various areas. These meetings also serve as a supervisory tool for the team, which is essential in a demanding service environment.

In October 2024, the NHSE Matrix was completed and presented to NHSE. This received positive feedback in terms of improved governance structures. The current priorities identified at this time were; to work with Shropshire SEND and AP Partnership, NHSE and DfE to progress APP actions, develop the SEND Data Dashboard, addressing the current waiting times for SALT and ND assessments, enhancing the quality of EHCPs and support/progress the change programme partnership involvement. Within this meeting, we highlighted the key areas of success which were very much focused around the 'support whilst waiting for CYP awaiting their ND assessment'.

Regular meetings with the NHSE Senior SEND Manager were stood down due to changes within structures within NHSE however we continue to have positive regular communication with our leads within NHSE.

Risk management

A risk register was created in July 2024 in view of the reduced staffing capacity within the team and the impact to the wider system in terms of attendance to ND and SLT workstreams, no resilience of the Associate DCO role therefore impacting upon the ability to be able to complete all Education Health Care Plan activity including attendance at panels. There have been developments over the year and the risk register as of March 2025 includes those risks states with additional risks identified as the limited capacity of the Senior Responsible Officer for SEND in view of the role being in addition to the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding, the increase in the number of single point of access requests being received, the identification of there not currently being a Data Sharing Agreement or Data Protection Impact Assessment in either partnership (the LAs are the data controllers therefore should sit with them) and gaps in provision where no single agency takes responsibility including equipment for settings. The return of the DCO has supported deescalation of several risks. The register is reviewed at every team meeting that take place monthly and updates are provided by the ICB's Head of Safety and Quality Improvement and Chief Nursing Officer for oversight and action where necessary.

Priorities for 2025 – 2026

The ICB SEND Team met in September to agree priorities for the upcoming academic year. These priorities were set in the context of continued focused on the core requirements of the ICB SEND Team including Education, Health and Care Plans and The SEND Change Programme. The priorities agreed in addition to the business-as-usual cover a range of areas of need, as well as projects which we anticipate will be completed over the next 12 months.

Priority area of needs

- Neurodiversity including Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Tics and Tourette's and Sensory Needs
- Learning Disability via contribution to the LDA Road Map
- Support for adults 18 – 25 with SEND, including Preparation for Adulthood
- Managing medical needs in school, including Special School Nursing Model and Individual Funding Requests
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health including Emotionally Based School Avoidance
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- Co-producing with CYP and hearing the voice of CYP

Agreed projects to be led or supported by the SEND Team

- Hospital passports and reasonable adjustments
- ICB / Health SEND Newsletter
- Joint processes for equipment procurement and oversight
- SEND inspection readiness
- Supporting the GP workforce to meet the needs of those with SEND
- Promoting SEND resources which were developed in 24/25

It is also important to note the opportunities of working more closely with ICB SEND colleagues from Stoke and Staffordshire in 25/26. From initial discussions with colleagues in Stoke and Staffordshire there is a general view that SEND functions are delivered in a similar way despite sitting in a different structure.

Summary

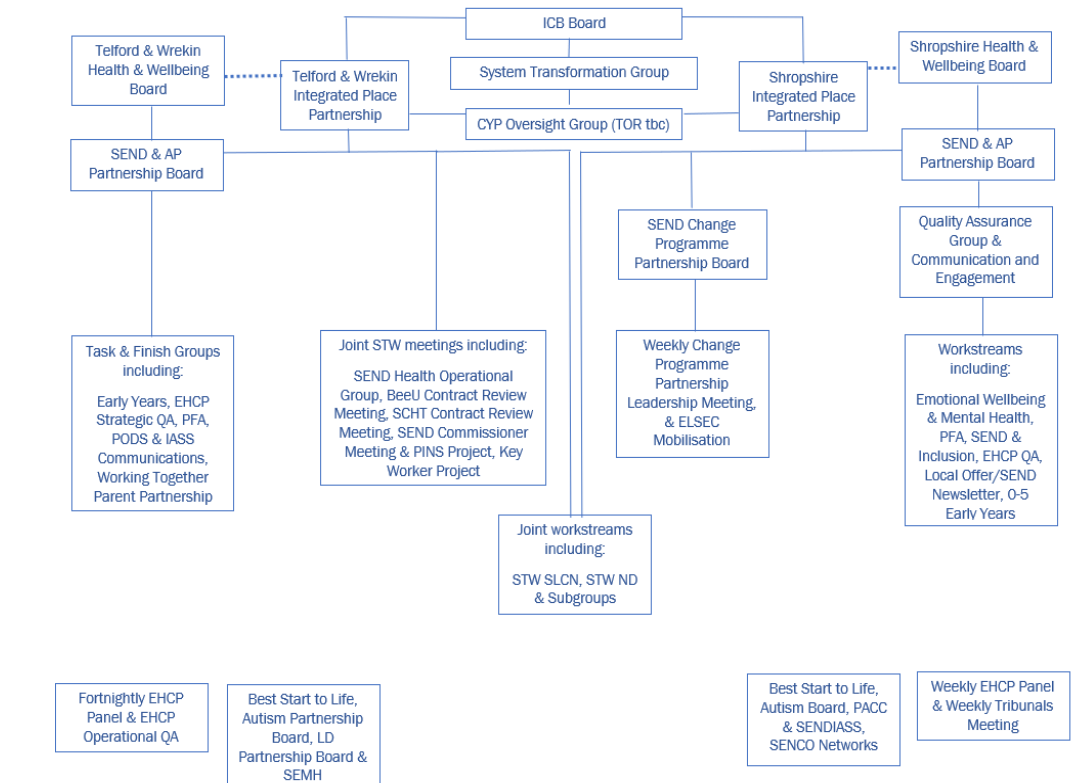
This report sets out the main activities undertaken by the ICB SEND team September 24 – September 25, however it is not an exhaustive report and does not fully detail the business-as-usual activity. The output described in the report have been completed through the resource available during a period of maternity leave within the team, thus leaving the team depleted but noting significant support from the Senior Responsible Officer for SEND. It is acknowledged that now the team is back to full complement the current capacity will be able to drive improvement of some systemic challenges as set out in the 25/26 priorities. National changes with regards to SEND are expected in the near future with a SEND White Paper originally due in Autumn 25 but pushed back until Spring 26. The ICB SEND team will need to work responsively to these changes as they become statute.



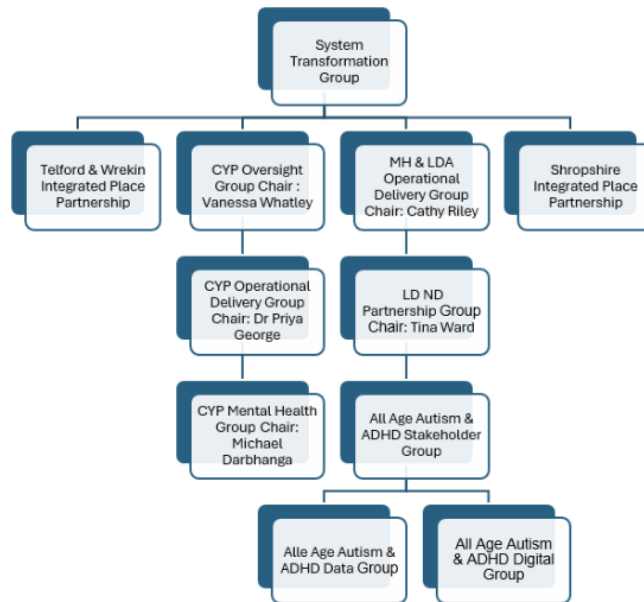
Appendix A

SEND governance is spread across the system therefore 4 diagrams are required at present to depict the range of meetings and governance relevant to SEND.

As of October 2024 the governance structure below set the range of meetings relevant to SEND:

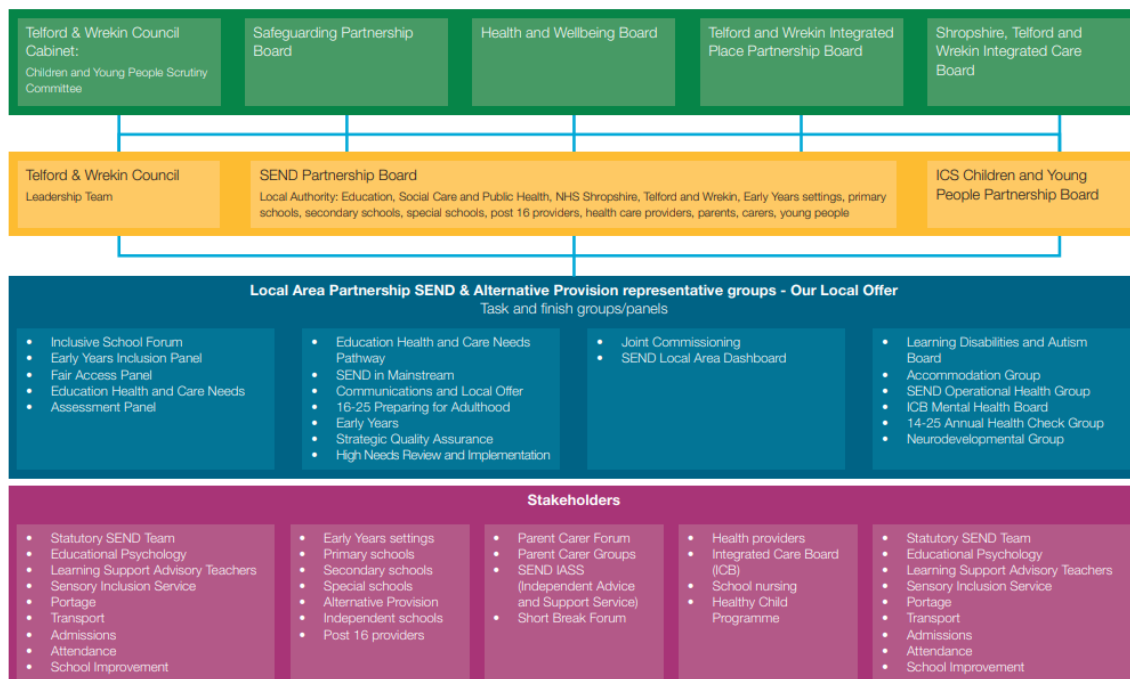


Towards the end of this reporting period the governance under the System Transformation Group has developed, as reflected below:



Telfor and Wrekin Local Authority depict the SEND Governance below:

Local Area Partnership Governance and Oversight Functions



Shropshire Local Authority depict the SEND Governance below:

