

SEND and Alternative Provision Board Newsletter: September 2025

The SEND and Alternative Provision Board is a meeting to implement and oversee the SEND strategy for Salford. This is a shared partnership approach with representatives from health, education, children's and adults social care, voluntary sector, parents and carers, elected members, and the wider council. We aim to support and improve services so that all children with SEND can reach their full potential in Salford, it is currently chaired by Cathy Starbuck, Director of Education and Inclusion and Melissa Caslake, Executive Director Children's Service.

A number of subgroups report into the board. The current subgroups are Transitions, Neurodevelopmental Approach, Graduated Approach, EHCPs and Alternative Provision. Each subgroup reports on progress being made to the SEND board on a rolling programme.

Below is a brief summary of the topic areas that were covered at our latest SEND and Alternative Provision Board which took place on the 2nd of September. We hope you find this update useful. Please send any feedback or if you have any ideas to nicola.robbs@salford.gov.uk



Agenda	Key Points
Voice of the Child	The board heard about a recent visit by an educational psychologist to the YETI (Young, Energetic, Talented, Intelligent) SEND Youth Council. They are a group of young people with additional needs and disabilities who live, are educated or work in Salford. The council members talked about how they would like to work with the service and their thoughts on one page profiles, annual reviews and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's). They also discussed what they felt the important qualities of an educational psychologist are. The educational psychology service have now taken all of the suggestions made and written a summary of what they were told and what they intend to do next. This has been shared with the Youth Council.
Deep Dive – Education, Health and Care Plans	The board were presented with data about the current demand, performance, quality and risk regarding Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) in Salford. The headlines were: In 2024 946 requests for an EHCP assessment were received. This is up from 834 in 2023, an increase of 13.4%. At the end of 24/25 there were 3387 plans in the city, an increase of 5.6% from 23/24. EHC Plans issued in 20 weeks excluding exceptions in 2024 was 62.6%. This is way above the national average of 46.4%. In 2024/25 there were 2936 annual reviews held

	Quality Assurance Every month, a selection of EHCPs and Annual Reviews are assured by the EHCP sub-group comprising senior representation from health, schools, children's services and partners. Findings from the recent EHCP quality assurance are: Where section A is thoroughly completed, there is detailed information provided by parent / carer and by the child, either directly or indirectly from people who know them. This ensures that outcomes can clearly reflect aspirations and connects each section to those following it. Where section B is well completed it is evident that it is clearly based on professional advices and strengths and needs are well articulated and results in a clear picture of all the special educational needs of the child. When Sections E and F are completed well, the outcomes identified clearly reflect parent aspirations, advice is clearly reflected, provision is only that which is above SEN Support and there are clear connections between needs, outcomes and provision. Across all sections, the language used in plans was appropriate, affirmative and jargon free, and plans were written in a way that was clear and easy to understand. Designated Social Care Officer The Board also heard from Claire Yeaman about her first 3 Months as Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) Key achievements include: Greater collaborative work with the educational psychologist service by social workers accessing the drops in available 10 SEND Champions recruited Tracking of all children open to children's social care/ Early Help whom are subject to an EHC needs assessment Strong partnerships with CAMHS, pediatrics, education, and parent forums.
DFE Letter	The Board were presented with a letter sent to Melissa Caslake from Vicky Beer, CBE – Regional Director NW Department for Education. Summary of contents: • The government acknowledges that while some children have good outcomes, the current SEND system is often adversarial and not meeting needs—this must change. • Significant investment has been made through the Spending Review to support inclusive education, specialist interventions, and improved local delivery. • Local areas will be commissioned in Autumn 2025 to develop plans for inclusive systems, aligned with the upcoming Schools White Paper.

	• £740 million in high needs capital funding has been allocated for 2025–26 to improve mainstream accessibility and create special school places. • The Department for Education will work with partners to share best practice and support local efforts to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
Salford Neurodevelopment Assessment Impact report	The board heard about the planned changes to CAMHS criteria across Greater Manchester. A paper was presented to the board outlining potential risks and will be escalated back to GM to consider and plan for impact on local service provision and access to Autism/ADHD diagnostic assessments for children and young people in Salford.
Child Friendly Salford Survey	The board heard about the Child Friendly City Survey. Over the next year, we'll be asking Salford's children and young people what they want to see - what would make a difference to their lives, and what changes and improvements could we make? The survey can be found here: Child Friendly City•Salford City Council
Recent SEND inspections	ADCS SEND Inspection Outcomes Link to the recent SEND inspections for information.