

SEND and Alternative Provision Board Newsletter: October 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 Services.

A number of subgroups report into the board. The current subgroups are Transitions, Neurodevelopmental Approach, Graduated Approach, EHCPs, Alternative Provision, Preparation for Adult Life, SEND Performance and Engagement and Participation. 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 6th October. 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	<p>Supported Internship Success Story – Belle</p> <p>The Board heard the inspiring case study of Belle, a 21-year-old young who was previously enrolled at Future Skills. Belle expressed a strong interest in joining a supported internship programme to gain practical experience, build confidence, and develop employability skills.</p> <p>During the internship, Belle completed two work placements, which provided valuable opportunities to learn workplace routines, improve mental health, and explore the types of environments best suited to their strengths. While some aspects of the placements were challenging, Belle made notable progress in customer service and communication skills.</p> <p>Following the internship, Belle was assessed as work-ready, demonstrating solid workplace competencies. Belle was successful at interview and began induction training in preparation for their first paid employment opportunity.</p> <p>This case highlights the positive impact of supported internships in helping young people with additional needs transition into meaningful employment.</p>
Deep Dive – Transitions into Adult Services	<p>The board received an update on progress, achievements, and ongoing priorities for transitions for children into adult services.</p> <p>Rationale for change</p>

	<p>Salford's previous Transitions Policy was outdated, difficult to use, and lacked accessible guidance for families and professionals, making effective planning and support challenging. A revised, practical policy was needed to provide clarity, promote early conversations, and ensure flexible, person-centred planning based on lived experiences.</p> <p>What has been delivered</p> <p>The team have now successfully co-produced and launched a refreshed multi-agency Transitions Policy and Strategy, aligned with Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) principles and supported by both Children's and Adult Services. A Transitions Hub is now operational, with monthly meetings and a live tracker in place to monitor young people referred to the Transitions Team, enabling better coordination and data-informed planning. Ongoing improvements are driven by a live action plan, national best practice, and consistent referral processes, ensuring transitions are flexible, person-centred, and responsive to local needs.</p> <p>The Salford Pledge</p> <p>In Salford, our services have committed to the following different roles and responsibilities to ensure effective transitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Services (Health and Social Care): Begin transition planning, sharing information and considering preparing for adult life and involving young people, where possible, in decision-making. • Adult Services (Health and Social Care): Work in partnership with children's services to receive referrals and assessments early, ensuring that adult services are prepared to support the young person's needs. • Education: Engage in transition discussions and planning to ensure that educational support, where needed, is maintained during and after transition. • Commissioners: Ensure services are commissioned and structured to provide continuous care during the transition phase, considering the NICE recommendations for a flexible approach to services. <p>Further improvement</p> <p>To improve, we must fully embed the policy across services, equip staff with the right tools and language, and ensure multi-agency collaboration and lived experiences shape future outcomes.</p>
SEND Leaders impact report and graduated approach sub group report	<p>The board heard an update on the work and impact of the SEND Leaders service. The service, now in its third year, provides free, whole-school improvement support for SEND learners across all age ranges and educational phases. Led by a team of experienced professionals, the service works closely with SENDCOs and leadership teams to strengthen provision, using tools such as SEND reviews, CPD, and a best practice directory. While sitting within the School Improvement Service, the team also supports the wider local authority through collaborative work and panel involvement.</p>

Long Term Vision and Service Priorities

- SENCOs to feel supported and empowered
- Consistent practices across Salford
- Early & precise identification of SEND
- Improved Band A support (QFT Level)
- Effective use of the Graduated Response (signposting)
- Improved evidence building towards EHCP applications
- Improved policy and practice around Transition

Information on SEND Leader visits was shared showing that:

In Primary, the biggest support element is SENCO support (20%), followed closely by Leadership & Management and the Graduated Approach (18%). The smallest support area in Primary is Data (1%).

In Secondary, the biggest support focus was SENCO Support (31%), followed by Leadership & Management (22%). The smallest support area in Secondary was Ofsted Preparation and Multi-agency Meetings (1%)

In Post 16, the biggest area of support was CPD (35%), followed by SENCO Support at (25%). The lowest support at Post 16 was Graduated Approach, Data & Exam and Teaching & Learning (3%)

Service next steps The service will use data to identify trends and ensure support is directed to the right settings, while embedding the Graduated Approach consistently across all provisions. Staff will be supported through CPD, action plans, and improved tools to strengthen SEND planning, classroom practice, and transitions—particularly for those without EHCPs. A focus on collaboration, accessible family guidance, and understanding Salford's diverse population will help ensure positive, well-prepared transitions for children and young people.

Reasonable Adjustments The Board discussed and noted that inclusion on the SEND register should be determined by the individual needs of the young person and the requirement for reasonable adjustments within the school setting. A formal diagnosis should not be a prerequisite for placement on the register. SEND Leaders are working with leaders in settings, specifically on adhering to the Code of Practice legislation. (6.2, 6.9, 6.20, 6.21, 6.22, 6.23)

The board also heard an update on the recent work of the graduated approach sub group:

The Graduated Approach sub group, supported through Safety Valve funding, reviewed and improved professional resources and webpages, resulting in a comprehensive and locally tailored document for Salford practitioners. The group has worked with the Educational Psychology Service to develop tools that support attendance and relational approaches, added assessment resources to the Graduated Approach webpages, and engaged parents to build confidence in understanding support. Additionally, work has begun on improving Individual Education Plans (IEPs), with the subgroup collaborating to produce examples of good practice and accessible guidance for families.

SEND scorecard	<p>The board were presented with some of the key messages from the SEND scorecard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salford's EHCP rate has steadily increased to 5.8% and has surpassed the national average (5.3%). At the end of Q2 there were 3543 EHCP's being maintained in the city. • The number of requests for EHCP assessments has remained steady and is below the average figure for the North- West. • At the end of Q2 2024, there were 23 young people with a plan registered as EHE. This has risen to 31 at the end of Q2 2025. • At the end of Q2 2024, there were 21 young people with a plan on an EOTAS package. This has risen to 38 at the end of Q2 2025. • The number of plans finalised in 20 weeks excluding exceptions has risen to 79%. • So far in 2025, 1750 annual reviews have been held. In Q2, 77% of those were held within 12 months of the last review.
Children with disability register	<p>The board heard about the Children with disability register. Local authorities are legally required to maintain a Children with Disability Register (CDR) to improve visibility and support for disabled children across services. While registration is voluntary for families, the register itself is mandatory and helps with planning, communication, and monitoring service gaps. In Salford, awareness of the CDR has been low so far. Parents have requested the term "Register" be changed to "Record" to avoid negative associations, and this feedback has been incorporated into new webpages. The record supports statutory compliance, better resource allocation, and improved equity in service delivery. We need to consider how we promote this with parents.</p> <p>Disabled Children's Record•Salford City Council</p>
Recent SEND inspections	<p>ADCS SEND Inspection Outcomes</p> <p>Link to the recent SEND inspections for information.</p>