

SEND Board Meeting

Date: 16 September 2025

This briefing is a summary of key updates and decisions of the September SEND Board meeting.

The agenda focused on inspection preparation, quality assurance, performance data, participation strategies, preparing for adulthood and neurodiversity pathway implementation. Key discussions included finalising documentation, embedding quality assurance practices, analysing SEND pupil outcomes, and enhancing engagement with young people and families.

Inspection Preparation Activity

Annex A

Annex A is a critical component of the Area SEND inspection process, serving as the initial evidence base requested when a local area is notified of inspection. It comprises a comprehensive set of documents and datasets that reflect the local area's arrangements for children and young people with SEND. This includes strategic plans, self-evaluation frameworks, performance data (e.g. attendance, exclusions, waiting times), commissioning arrangements, and details of alternative provision.

The purpose of Annex A is to enable inspectors to select cases for tracking and to evaluate the effectiveness of local SEND services.

Stockport's Annex A library is managed through a quality assurance process involving multi-agency collaboration, with deadlines and RAG ratings used to monitor completeness and readiness. The owners of the key documents have been set a target of 10th October to complete the pack.

Specific items such as Lists 1 and 2—covering EHCP and SEN Support cohorts—are used to provide person-level data for Inspection Case Tracking.

The documentation must be finalised and uploaded promptly, in Week 1 of the inspection window, to support case reviews and thematic analysis.

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Self-Evaluation

The Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) is a key document used in Area SEND inspection which will be uploaded as part of the Annex A datasets. It provides a concise, honest, and evaluative overview of how effective we are as a partnership in supporting children and young people with SEND and those in Alternative Provision (AP).

We will use the SEF as a guide to continuous improvement and strategic planning across education, health, and care, linked to programme managed project plans delivering the SEND Strategy.

The document must be concise and current; focussed on judgment, evidence, impact, and next steps; and governance-owned, with clear accountability and strategic alignment.



Work continues to finalise the document with a deadline for key contributors of 19th September. Next steps is to agree the content and ensure it is condensed to share across the Partnership via the Local Offer.

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Multi-Agency Case Tracking

Inspectors select six cases from Annex A Lists 1 and 2 (EHCP and SEN Support cohorts) and track in depth to assess how well the local area identifies and meets the needs of children and young people with SEND. They will review the child's journey, voice, and impact of services and triangulate evidence from practitioners, families, and children/young people.

The process involves holding multi-agency audits involving education, health, and social care professionals and practitioners where inspectors may challenge delivery and decision-making, focusing on whether the right help was provided at the right time.

Professionals and practitioners involved with selected cases must:

- Complete a case audit template.
- Provide evidence such as:
 - EHCPs, SEN Support Plans, Personal Education Plans.
 - Health care plans, therapy recommendations, MDT reports.
 - Commissioning agreements (especially for Alternative Provision).
 - Notes from multi-agency discussions and statutory assessments.
- Attend a multi-agency meeting in preparation for the inspection meeting
- Attend the inspection meeting and provide feedback in the form of a de-brief.

In addition, there are focused case sampling meetings where inspectors speak to one or two practitioners or officers to explore:

- How decisions are made and overseen.
- The quality and statutory compliance of EHC plans.
- How agencies work together and meet legal responsibilities.

Board members were asked ensure professionals and practitioners are briefed and to consider how they would pull this data together in their own organisations to meet tight inspection deadlines.

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Quality Assurance Framework

The Quality Assurance Framework sets out a shared, partnership-wide approach to evaluating and improving the quality of services for children and young people aged 0–25 with SEND. It replaces previous frameworks and introduces a stronger focus on the impact of actions taken across education, health, and care.

The framework supports a joined-up cycle of learning and continuous improvement, ensuring that services are consistent, timely, and outcome-focused.



It applies to children with:

- SEN Support Plans
- Undergoing EHC Needs Assessments (EHCNA)
- Holding Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

The framework uses a range of activities including reflective audits, which are multi-agency reviews focused on the impact of provision on individual children and families, and thematic audits, which assess legal compliance and practice standards across the system. In addition data sources and feedback help to identify:

- What is working well and why
- What needs improvement
- How services can better support children and families

It also ensures compliance with statutory duties and promotes a culture of co-production, transparency, and accountability across the SEND partnership.

The first report under the new framework will be brought to the next SEND Board.

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Performance Data

The latest performance data focusing on attendance, persistent absence, suspensions, exclusions, and outcomes for SEND pupils was presented to the Board to identify trends, exceptions, and areas for further investigation and action.

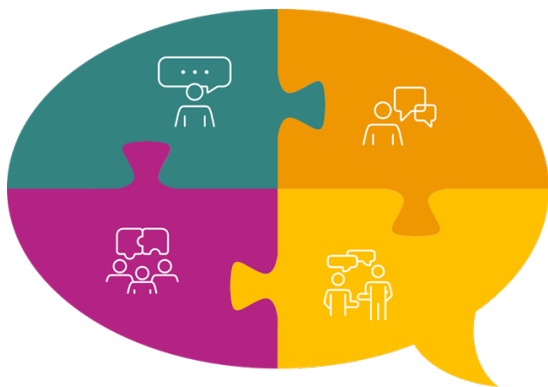
Key headlines include:

- overall absence rates for SEND pupils remain static and above comparators, with persistent absence rates showing a downward trend but still high, especially in secondary schools and PRUs.
- a recent increase in permanent exclusions for EHCP pupils, prompting an audit of all nine cases to identify learning points. Suspensions remain high, with 495 instances for EHCP pupils, and actions were agreed to investigate underlying causes and system responses.

Further analysis was commissioned to include data by year group and overlaying vulnerabilities. This would enable further targeted case file audits to inform future actions and improve outcomes for SEND pupils.

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Participation and Engagement Strategy



The refreshed participation delivery plan was presented, highlighting ongoing efforts to embed participation and co-production across the system, strengthening mechanisms for capturing lived experience, and coordinating engagement activities.

The plan includes a range of participation methods, such as focus groups, scrutiny panels, and the young inspectors programme, with efforts to increase inclusivity and cultural representation. The 'You Said, We Did' initiative and workforce development activities were also highlighted.



The system-wide coordination of engagement activities will include actions to identify senior leads for participation coaching and to map existing participation work across organisations for greater impact.

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Preparing for Adulthood (PFA)

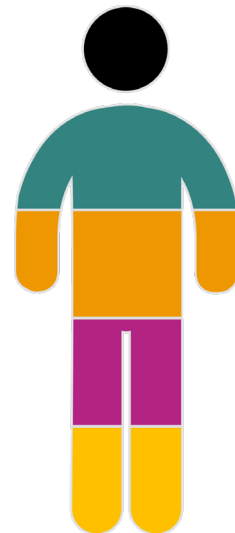
The Board received a report including the development of a refreshed PFA strategy, establishment of operational tracking groups, and initiatives to improve early support and joint working between children's and adult services.

The team has embedded joint operational meetings to track young people transitioning from children's to adult social care, introduced a cross-service PfA Policy, and implemented 'waiting well' initiatives to engage with young people earlier.

Efforts are underway to improve data dashboards to assess improvements in outcomes and enhance workforce understanding of legal frameworks and support pathways through training and information updates.

Next steps include public consultation, workforce engagement, and the development of an action plan to ensure that the voices of young people and families inform service improvements and pathway development.

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Greater Manchester Neurodiversity Pathway

Stockport received £215,000 to develop a neurodiversity hub, with resources allocated to recruit neurodiversity workers and deliver early help and support for children and young people with suspected autism or ADHD.

The new model prioritises a needs-led offer over a diagnostic dependent offer, with ongoing work at Greater Manchester level to design a triage and diagnostic assessment pathway, expected to be rolled out by January 2026.

Board members expressed concerns regarding whether the new hub will have sufficient capacity to meet demand, especially once the planned changes to the CAMHS specification take effect. They also highlighted challenges around effective communication both within the partnership and with families, as well as the potential impact these changes may have on access to diagnosis—particularly for vulnerable groups and individuals needing ADHD medication. While the options of 'right to choose' and private diagnostic routes were acknowledged as helpful in supporting the system, it was noted that they also bring significant costs and additional pressure to existing services.

A task and finish group will be established to oversee implementation, address capacity and communication challenges, and ensure alignment with other SEND and mental health initiatives. It was also agreed to escalate the risks and issues as a partnership to the Stockport One Health and Care Executive.

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