



SHROPSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Report

Meeting Date	22nd January 2026			
Title of report	<u>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities & Alternative Provision (SEND & AP) Board update</u>			
This report is for (You will have been advised which applies)	Discussion and agreement of recommendations	x	Approval of recommendations (With discussion by exception)	Information only (No recommendations)
Reporting Officer & email	David Shaw, Director of Children's Services, David.shaw@shropshire.gov.uk John Rowe, Head of Education Quality and Safeguarding john.rowe@shropshire.gov.uk			
Which Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities does this report address? Please tick all that apply	Children & Young People	X	Joined up working	
	Mental Health		Improving Population Health	
	Healthy Weight & Physical Activity		Working with and building strong and vibrant communities	
	Workforce		Reduce inequalities (see below)	X
What inequalities does this report address?	By implementing the outlined strategies and frameworks, the SEND partnership aims to address disparities in access to services and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). These measures are designed to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances, receive equitable opportunities and resources and that every child and young person thrives. Through continuous review and targeted action, the approach seeks to close gaps in outcomes and promote greater inclusion across Shropshire.			

Report content

1. Executive Summary

Over the last 12 months, significant improvements have been made across Shropshire's SEND provision. Collaborative work between the local authority, the Integrated Care Board, and the Parent and Carer Council (PACC) has led to enhanced co-production and the development of cohesive structures linking key aspects of SEND services. Notably, health wait times for children and young people have improved, aided by the introduction of a speech and language risk matrix tool, and therapy sessions are now more accessible within mainstream schools. The EHC plan team has focused on improving the quality and accuracy of plans, with further resource allocated to the annual review recovery plan to ensure all plans are up to date by Easter 2026. There has also been a substantial reduction in permanent exclusions, supported by the Inclusive Development Grant, strengthened inclusive practice, and increased training opportunities for school staff. Furthermore, the expansion of specialist places and the SEN hubs have improved access to support for children and young people across the county.

Despite these positive developments, challenges remain. Long waits for education, health and care (EHC) plans and neurodiverse assessments persist due to rising demand, although

steps have been taken to outsource services and commission new providers. Sufficiency of provision remains a priority. We also recognise the challenges around the growth in the proportion of children who are Electively Home Educated – reflecting a national trend. PACC have highlighted the need for further improvements in co-production and strategic involvement, for example, in hub development. Financial pressures and geographical challenges also continue to affect service delivery, and further work is required to ensure equitable access and high-quality practice across Shropshire. The partnership remains committed to addressing these areas, with ongoing monitoring and quality assurance to drive future improvements.

The papers attached, provide key evidence and strategic context for the recommendations and findings presented. These documents offer a comprehensive overview of the current status, recent developments, and future planning related to SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) services in the area:

- **SEND and AP Strategy and Outcomes Framework:** This strategy document sets out the long-term vision and specific objectives for improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND, including monitoring frameworks and key performance indicators. *It can be found here* [SEND & AP Strategy 2024–2029 and Outcomes Framework | Shropshire Council](#)
- **Shropshire APP review 30 month feedback letter:** This correspondence details progress against the Area Partnership Plan at the 30-month mark, highlighting achievements, ongoing actions, and areas where further improvements are required. *See Appendix A.*
- **Ofsted/CQC annual conversation letter:** The letter summarises discussions held with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, reflecting on local progress and identifying any areas for targeted support or development during the coming year. *See Appendix B.*
- **Area SEND SEF (last update Dec 2025):** This Self-Evaluation Form outlines the strengths, challenges, and priority areas for SEND provision across the locality, incorporating feedback from service users, parents, carers, and partner agencies.- please note that we can circulate this document after the meeting for those who are interested, please apply to john.rowe@shropshire.gov.uk

2. Recommendations

The Board are recommended to note the contents of this briefing

3. Report

Please see documents in the appendices.

Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal <i>(NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)</i>	The recent developments in SEND in Shropshire present both risks and promising opportunities. Whilst changes may bring challenges such as ensuring sufficient resources, maintaining service quality, and managing transitions for children and families, they also open doors to improved outcomes through more integrated support, innovative practices, and greater collaboration across agencies. Through continued strong partnership working, informed by honest self-evaluation, Shropshire can further enhance the provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities
Financial implications <i>(Any financial implications of note)</i>	The financial implications with respect to SEND significant, with a £41 million deficit in the High Needs Block (HNB) budget presenting a major challenge to sustainability. Added to this, there is considerable uncertainty regarding the future management of

	the HNB, following the Chancellor's recent announcement concerning national SEND funding, as well as the planned cessation of Change Programme funding from August. Despite these pressures, substantial efforts are being made to address demand through a focus on prevention and early intervention, aiming to reduce longer-term costs and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.	
Climate Change Appraisal as applicable	N/A	
Where else has the paper been presented?	System Partnership Boards	SEND and AP Partnership Board
	Voluntary Sector	Reports have been shared and, in some cases, co-produced with Shropshire Parent Carer Council (PACC)
	Other	
List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)		
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) or your organisational lead e.g., Exec lead or Non-Exec/Clinical Lead		
David Shaw, Director of Children's Services, Shropshire Council Cllr. Andy Hall, Children & Education Shropshire Council		
Appendices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix A. Shropshire APP review 30 month feedback letter • Appendix B. Ofsted/CQC annual conversation letter 		