

OFFICIAL



Hull Local Area Partnership SEND Self Evaluation

Summer 2026



Contents

1. Executive Summary	pg. 3
2. Local Context	pg. 5
3. We Value and Learn From Feedback	pg. 6
4. Children and Young People's Needs Are Identified Accurately and Assessed in a Timely and Effective Way	pg. 11
5. Children and Young People and Their Families Participate in Decision-Making About Their Individual Plans and Support	pg. 42
6. Children and Young People Receive the Right Help and Support at the Right Time	pg.50
7. Children and Young People Are Well Prepared for Their Next Steps and Achieve Strong Outcomes	pg.60
8. Children and Young People with SEND Are Valued, Visible and Included in Their Communities	pg. 72
9. Leadership of SEND	pg. 83
10. Summary of Priorities for the Next 12 Months	pg. 100

1. Executive Summary

The Hull Local Area Partnership is ambitious for every child and young person with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Leaders across education, health and social care share a clear vision that children and young people with SEND should be valued, visible, included within their communities and supported to achieve positive outcomes throughout their lives. This ambition is underpinned by a strong commitment to inclusion, early intervention, partnership working and continuous improvement.

At the heart of Hull's SEND strategy is a commitment to listening to and acting upon the voices of children, young people and their families. Co-production is increasingly embedded across the partnership, with children, young people, parent carers and representative groups actively influencing strategic priorities, service design and individual support arrangements. The Hull Parent Carer Forum, Youth Parliament, Parents United groups, SENDIASS and a wide range of participation activities ensure that lived experience shapes both policy and practice. Leaders can demonstrate numerous examples where feedback has directly influenced service improvement, strengthening trust and ensuring services are designed with families rather than for them.

The partnership has made significant progress since the previous SEND inspection. Strong governance arrangements, robust self-evaluation and effective multi-agency leadership have driven improvements across the system. Leaders have expanded local provision, strengthened outreach services, improved the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), increased supported internship opportunities and invested in workforce development. There is clear evidence that more children and young people are having their needs identified earlier, accessing support more quickly and benefiting from improved inclusion within education and their wider communities.

The partnership's approach is characterised by a determination to ensure that SEND is everybody's business. Schools, health services, social care, early years providers and voluntary sector partners work together to create a coordinated response to need. The award-winning Workforce Development Strategy, significant investment in specialist outreach and the expansion of local specialist provision demonstrate leaders' commitment to ensuring more children can have their needs met within their local communities and alongside their peers.

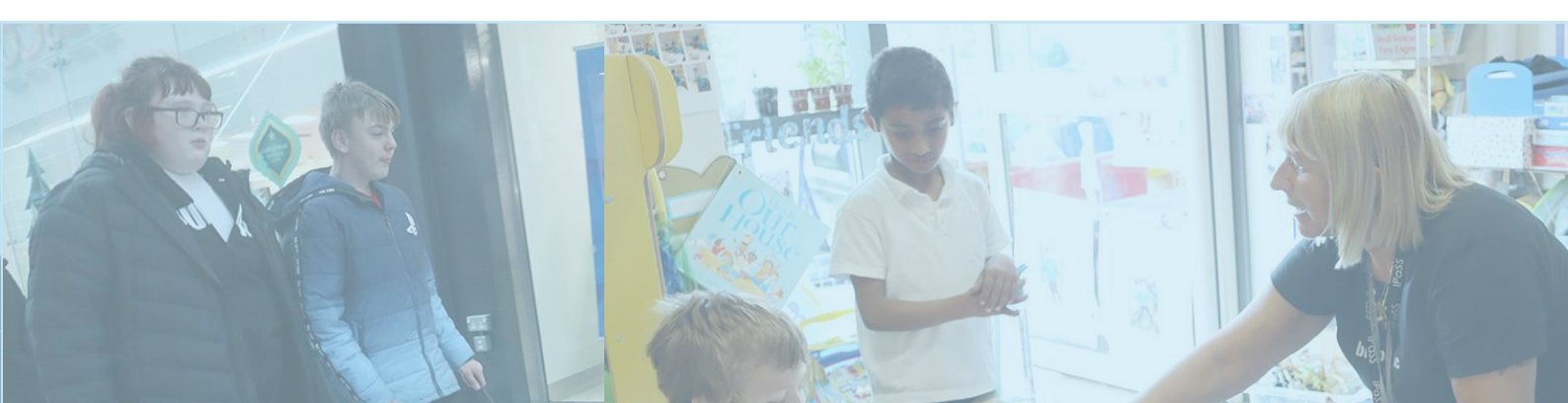
Children, young people and families are reporting positive experiences across many aspects of the SEND system. There is growing evidence that participation, preparation for adulthood, emotional wellbeing support, inclusion and access to community opportunities are improving. Hull's commitment to hearing and

responding to lived experience is a particular strength and reflects leaders' determination to place children and families at the centre of decision-making.

However, leaders recognise that significant challenges remain. Increasing demand across SEND services continues to place pressure on assessment pathways, workforce capacity and specialist health services. Waiting times for some neurodevelopmental assessments remain too long, EHCP timeliness requires further improvement, and the quality and timeliness of social care advice within statutory assessment processes are not yet where leaders want them to be. Leaders are candid about these challenges and have identified clear priorities and improvement plans to address them.

The Local Area Partnership is therefore both proud of the progress that has been made and realistic about the journey that remains ahead. Leaders are not complacent. They recognise that while many children and young people are experiencing better outcomes and stronger support, the ambition must be for every child and young person with SEND to receive the right help, at the right time, in the right place. Achieving this consistently across the whole system remains the partnership's overriding priority.

Overall, Hull's SEND self-evaluation demonstrates a partnership with strong leadership, a culture of collaboration, a deep commitment to co-production and an unwavering ambition to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Leaders have a clear understanding of both strengths and areas for development and are determined to continue working alongside children, young people, families and partners to create a SEND system that is increasingly inclusive, responsive and effective for every child.



2. The Local Context

Compact and highly urbanised, Hull is the most densely populated local authority in the Yorkshire and Humber region. 62,000 children and young people aged 0 to 17 years old account for 23% of the city's overall population (275,000).

Children's health is generally poorer than the England average, health inequalities closely linked to deprivation. Hull is the 6th most deprived upper tier local authority out of 153 nationally. More than a third (estimated to be between 36% and 38%) of children and young people live in poverty and more than 50% of children experience severe disadvantage. The school population is over 43,500, with 9,826 pupils identified as having special educational needs.

Evidence from the early years demonstrates that the number of children with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) population remains high. Numbers on the Area SENCOs' caseloads steadily increased since 2023 but have stabilised over the last 2 years. By the end of 2026, 1500 children were being supported. The provisional GLD gap for those children with SEND and their peers narrowed slightly in 2025 to -44.5% and again in 2026 to -40.9%.

A significant number of new arrivals into the country present with complex learning and medical needs and it has been necessary to create a 'new in country' pathway to ensure that these are identified and met as early as possible. Without question, the city's Fair Access Protocol demands more of school leaders than is typical in most local areas. They manage high levels of pupil mobility, diversity and complexity as a result, but they typically do this extremely well. There is consistently strong support for the city's Fair Access Protocol.

The dominant primary need of children and young people with an education health care plan (EHC plan) continues to be Speech, Language and Communication Needs followed by Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Social, Emotional and Mental Health. The city has seen a 12% growth in Speech, Language and Communications needs over the last five years. Work in the early years focuses strongly on identifying and meeting these needs early and leaders have expanded and remodelled SEN outreach services to reflect post-pandemic changes to the demographic, filling gaps. The Local Area Partnership (LAP) workforce development strategy has also prioritised high incidence areas of need whilst also ensuring that there is a comprehensive training offer.

3. We value & learn from feedback

Inspection Area for Improvement 1: Preparation for Adulthood (PfA)

'Leaders should strengthen transition into adulthood arrangements for young people who do not meet thresholds for high needs and complex care.'

Leaders Actions

A dedicated PfA Strategic Lead was appointed within six months of the 2023 inspection and a multi-agency PfA Steering Group then established. Consultancy support from the NDTI was secured and their audit tool deployed to inform a partnership-wide audit of the local area's PfA offer. Gaps were identified and an action plan, underpinned by the four pillars, developed. This continues to drive improvements. These are detailed in the relevant section of this SEF but PfA does also feature in priorities for the next 12 months; leaders acknowledge there is more to do.

Impact

Evidence of impact includes a growth in internships; an expansion of employment pathways; improved advice and guidance; enhanced transition planning.

Inspection Area for Improvement 2: EHCP Quality

'Leaders should further develop and embed the quality assurance framework around all existing and newly issued EHC plans. This includes improving the quality and depth of contributions from health and social care partners so that EHC plans have a clear child and young person focus

and any outcomes are specific to the individual. Leaders should ensure that the EHC plans are shared with all services, including general practices.'

Leaders Actions

A newly developed Quality Assurance (QA) matrix based on the former InVision360 tool and aligned with the Council for Disabled Children's Good Practice Guide ensures that all new EHCPs meet high standards of clarity, accuracy and child-centred practice. Every new plan is quality assured: one in every two receives a full, in-depth evaluation using the matrix, while alternate plans undergo a detailed proof-read to maintain consistency and statutory compliance. Quarterly spot-sampling validates quality, identifies trends and prevents practice drift.

Monthly QA reports to the Head of SEND enable leaders to analyse strengths, themes and areas for development. This systematic approach has driven continuous improvement, resulting in clearer golden threads through plans and stronger alignment between needs, provision and outcomes. Reflective learning loops ensure that lessons from QA activity directly inform targeted training, supporting practitioner confidence and maintaining high standards.

Multi-agency audits led by the Improvement Performance and Quality team further strengthen accountability and shared practice. These deep dives assess plan quality, service involvement and the visibility of the child's voice. Learning is shared with practitioners, celebrating strong practice while identifying areas requiring improvement.

Social care “stop the clock” processes reinforce expectations around timely, high-quality advice, while weekly health clinics strengthen health partners' duties and improve the accuracy and timeliness of health contributions.

To support effective information-sharing, EHCPs are now routinely shared with GPs as standard practice, ensuring health professionals have full oversight. For social care, EHCPs are flagged on LiquidLogic, improving visibility, coordination and timely involvement.

Governance arrangements remain strong. QA findings, audit themes and escalation data feed directly into SEND Board reporting, ensuring strategic oversight and driving a culture of continuous improvement. Collectively, this work has led to demonstrably higher-quality EHCPs, with children and young people firmly at the centre.

Impact

Monthly QA demonstrates:

- Stronger golden thread
- More personalised outcomes
- Better alignment between need, provision and outcomes
- Improved health contributions
- Stronger social care participation

Inspection Area for Improvement 3: Recording Vulnerability

‘Leaders should ensure that social care and education partners understand how to record the individual vulnerabilities of children and young people. Documentation and planning do not always include vital information such as existing support for risk taking, going missing episodes or alcohol misuse.’

Leaders Actions

The Children's Reporting Dashboard has been further refined to ensure that the individual vulnerabilities of children are shared across teams, to underpin holistic and detailed plans. This tool now enables systematic cross-checking of all children known to Social Care and Early Help who are also Electively Home Educated (EHE) and missing from education.

In addition, data from the Virtual School is integrated and aligned within the Annex A dataset for children looked after. This provides a comprehensive and consolidated view of key educational indicators, including current education provision, Personal Education Plans (PEPs), Average attendance rates,

Identification of children on reduced timetables (under 25 hours) This enhanced approach to data integration strengthens multi-agency oversight, supports earlier identification of emerging risks, and enables more timely and targeted interventions for vulnerable children and young people.

There are dedicated dashboard training sessions for staff take place throughout the year. The recent move to Liquid Logic services hosted in the provider's cloud has provided the opportunity for all dashboard reports to be systematically reviewed to ensure continued accuracy and provision of meaningful information to support decision-making for children.

Hull's Ofsted inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in March 2026 confirmed that social care planning is good. With the report stating:

Professionally curious social workers in the EHaSH understand risk and need very well. Safety planning is explicit in initial decision-making where there are concerns for children's safety.

Multi-agency safeguarding enquiries are timely and detailed and include the child's voice wherever possible:

"Social workers and partners work tirelessly to understand what is happening in children's lives. They respond quickly to emerging risks and build trusting relationships that help children feel safer and stay connected to their carers."

"Robust multi-agency partnerships, timely information-sharing and well-coordinated risk management plans ensure that everyone participates in acting cohesively and with urgency."

Impact

Ofsted ILACS March 2026 noted: good planning; strong safety planning; effective multi-agency working; clear understanding of risk

Inspection Area for Improvement 4: Workforce Development

'Leaders should develop a coordinated local area partnership approach to training and workforce development. It should be multi-disciplinary to ensure consistency of practice and accountability across all local area partners.'

Leaders Actions

A comprehensive, multi-layered and ambitious SEND Workforce Strategy won the 2026 Municipal Journal (MJ) Award for Workforce Optimisation.

In ensuring that SEND is everyone's business in Hull, the strategy promotes consistency of practice across the SEND partnership with key modules, such as 'Essential SEND,' mandatory for all CYPFS staff. All training promotes trauma-

informed and neuro-affirming practice, rooted in the social model of disability which is at the heart of the partnership's shared vision for SEND.

The review and recommissioning of SEND Outreach services in 2024/5 enabled leaders to introduce a tiered system of outreach support with universal training offered at Tier 1, targeted support at Tier 2 and individual support at Tier 3.

Robust contract management arrangements also hold providers to account in relation to the impact of training. This KPI data is shared with Hull's Learning Partnership, enabling CEOs to monitor the engagement of school leaders with the high quality SEND training available locally.

Impact

MJ Award recognition; Improved workforce confidence; Consistent SEND language across agencies; Stronger implementation of the graduated approach



Inspection Area for Improvement 5: Strengthening the Evaluation of Strategic Impact

'Leaders should measure the impact of strategic actions of the local area partnership more consistently. They should use the information to evaluate the effectiveness of the local partnership work and make further improvements to the provision for children and young people with SEND in Kingston upon Hull.'

Leaders Actions

The SEND improvement plan is structured around clearly defined workstreams, each with named project leads and formal reporting processes. Every one of the six Priority Areas is overseen by a designated Senior Responsible Owner (SRO), who is supported through an agreed project methodology. Regular highlight reports from SROs and project leads enable partners to monitor progress and evaluate the impact of improvement activity.

The Local Partnership Delivery Board oversees progress and assesses impact, with any significant issues or key highlight reports escalated to the SEND Strategic Board. This governance structure provides assurance and constructive challenge, ensuring performance is tracked.

A Benefits Realisation Log closely linked to the plan is used to capture and track the outcomes of each project. For every identified benefit, the log records:

- a description of the benefit

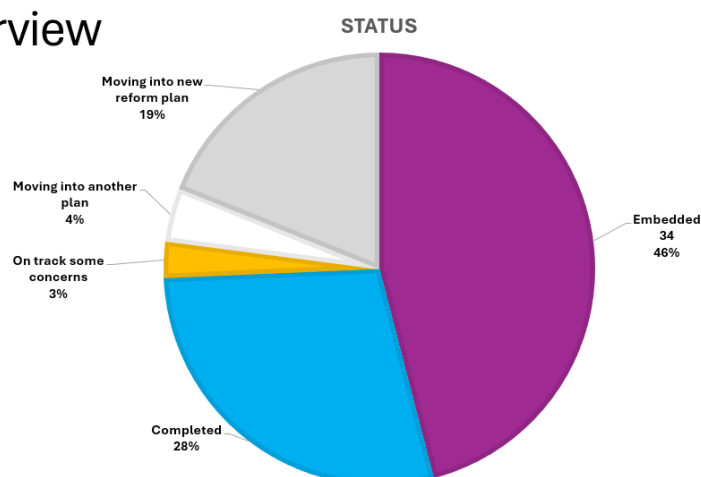
- the expected timeframe for delivery
- how it will be measured
- baseline and target performance
- the responsible lead
- whether it has been achieved
- and the evidence to support completion

Upon completion of activity within any Priority Area of the SEND Improvement Plan, the SRO will prepare a Closure Report to assess the impact of the improvement activity. This is reviewed first by the SEND Delivery Group and then by the SEND Strategic Board.

The Closure Report summarises progress, outcomes, and key learning, and confirms whether the activity or project is ready to close. Qualitative and quantitative data from closure reports has been integrated throughout this evidence-based SEF.

Overview

Work is now underway to coproduce the SEND Strategy 2027-30 which will integrate SEND Reform planning. The pie chart summarises the status of 2023-2026 actions and illustrates a track record of delivery.



Impact

Leaders now systematically evaluate outcomes; value for money; service effectiveness; delivery against priorities

“You have made significant progress in delivering your strategic improvement plan, and have a clear vision of what you wish to achieve further.”

Anthony Mayer, Regional Lead for SEND – 6 month review feedback letter, April 2025

4. Children & Young People's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

Leaders have established a highly effective multi-agency approach to early identification

Leaders have prioritised early identification across the SEND system, ensuring that children and young people's needs are recognised and responded to as early as possible. Strong partnership working between education, health and social care has created clear referral pathways and robust mechanisms for identifying emerging needs before they escalate. As a result, more children are accessing support at an earlier stage, enabling timely intervention and improved outcomes.

Health Visitor notifications ensure children with emerging needs are identified early

Strong partnership working between Health Visitors and the Local Authority Early Years Access and Inclusion Team ensures that children with actual or emerging SEND are identified at the earliest opportunity. Statutory notifications from Health Visitors enable concerns regarding development, communication, physical health and learning needs to be shared promptly, facilitating early intervention and reducing delays in accessing support. This coordinated approach enables children and families to receive the right support before needs become more complex.

An additional non-statutory early identification pathway is well embedded. This ensures that children who fail to meet their developmental milestones prior to or at the Ages & Stages Questionnaire 3 (ASQ3) are referred by Health visitors to the Early Years team for early intervention. In 2025/6, 309 referrals were received with 88 allocated to Portage, the remainder supported by the Early Years team.

Impact:

- Earlier identification of developmental concerns
- Timely access to support and specialist services
- Improved readiness for learning and successful transitions into education settings

Family Hubs provide accessible early support and strengthen identification of need

Best Start Family Hubs are embedded within local communities and provide a trusted, accessible gateway to support for families. The co-location of Midwifery, Health Visiting, birth registration, Early Help and early years provision creates daily opportunities for information sharing, professional collaboration and the timely identification of emerging needs. The presence of Private, Voluntary and

Independent (PVI) early years providers within Family Hub sites further strengthens relationships between practitioners and supports a coordinated response to children requiring additional support.

Health Visitors deliver the Universal Child Health Programme through a combination of home visits and regular child health clinics based within Family Hubs. Their close knowledge of local services enables families to be swiftly connected to appropriate support, whilst integrated working arrangements ensure concerns can be discussed and escalated promptly through agreed pathways. This coordinated approach reduces delays in accessing support and promotes earlier intervention.

Early Help practitioners play a significant role in identifying emerging concerns through their regular engagement with families attending play, learning and parenting sessions. The trusted relationships developed over time enable practitioners to hold sensitive conversations regarding child development, family circumstances and emerging vulnerabilities. As a result, families are more likely to access support at an earlier stage and engage with services before difficulties become entrenched.

The strengthening of links between Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care through the Family Help Test and Learn Team has further enhanced the local area's ability to provide coordinated support around the child and family. Families benefit from access to a broad range of services through a single community-based offer, including SEND support, housing advice, welfare support, domestic abuse services and employment support. This improves accessibility, reduces fragmentation and ensures families receive timely, holistic support.

Impact

- Children and young people with emerging SEND are identified earlier through coordinated multi-agency pathways
- Families have access to trusted community-based services which reduce barriers to seeking support
- Professional co-location and integrated working enable timely information sharing and earlier intervention
- Concerns are addressed before needs escalate, reducing the likelihood of crisis intervention and more specialist support being required
- Families receive coordinated support from a range of agencies through a single point of access, improving their experience of services
- Earlier access to advice, intervention and targeted support contributes to improved developmental outcomes, school readiness and successful transitions into education settings

Leaders can demonstrate that Family Hubs are a key component of Hull's early identification system. Through integrated working, accessible community provision and strong relationships with families, they enable needs to be

recognised and addressed at the earliest opportunity, ensuring children and young people receive the right support at the right time.

Portage support enables accurate assessment and intervention in the earliest years

The nationally accredited Portage Service provides specialist support for young children with significant developmental needs. Through developmental profiling, structured home-based learning and close partnership with families, children's strengths and needs are accurately assessed and personalised support is implemented at the earliest opportunity.

Strong links between Portage and Early Years Inclusion Teams ensure effective transition planning into early years settings and enable support to be adjusted as needs change. Children under two years old who meet the Portage Criteria are offered support from a portage home visitor. Children over 20 months are referred into the Inclusion team for support with transition into an early years setting. Hull's Portage team is registered with the National Portage Association. Early years foundation stage (EYFS) and Portage Development Profiles are used to accurately identify needs as the basis for individualised support. 88 referrals were received in the academic year 2025-26 with 101 families receiving support. The waiting list for the service has more than halved from last year, from 48 to 22 and all these families receive at least monthly phone calls from the team to check in and maintain contact. 38 children have been successfully transitioned into nursery over the past year and are being supported by the Area SENCOs and Inclusion Support Officers.

From January 2026 the Portage offer was increased to include PEEP sessions for children on the waiting list.

Between January and July 2026, 29 families were offered PEEP sessions. Of these 22 families accepted the offer, and 17 completed the programme. Following the completion of the sessions, five children no longer required intervention demonstrating the positive impact of early support and parent engagement through the programme.

G was absolutely incredible with my whole household. She was really engaging with the children, patient and kind.

She helped my twin's development wonderfully. They learnt so much and the activities that we used in sessions were brilliant to follow at home and

Impact:

- Earlier identification of complex developmental needs
- Improved family confidence and engagement
- Children enter education settings with support already in place
- Some children after attending PEEP sessions with their parent/carer no longer required additional support

First Steps to Communication strengthens early identification of speech, language and communication needs

The First Steps to Communication pathway provides a proactive, multi-agency response for children with emerging speech, language and communication needs. Referrals are reviewed through a multi-agency panel, ensuring children who do not meet the threshold for specialist Speech and Language Therapy receive timely intervention rather than waiting for needs to escalate.

In 2025/26, the capacity of the Assistant Practitioners decreased due to increased demand following the success of the implementation of ELIM (2-year assessment). However, the team trained 90 people across PVI settings, school nurseries, Health and childminders covering Let's Play (21), Listening for Sounds (13), Special Talking Time (28), Early Sounds (7) and Chatterbox (21). The aim going forward is to get Early Sounds training in place to try and offset referrals for speech needs (as opposed to language /interaction therapy).

350 First Step referrals were received in the last year, 52 recorded as inappropriate referrals with 298 allocated for support receiving interventions including Chatterbox, Let's Play, Special Talking Time, Symbolic Sound and specialist communication programmes.

Over the last year although a significant number went on to require referrals to the core service, the primary need being Social Communication Difficulties, 116 have not, the early intervention having been effective enabling them to be discharged back into universal services. A further 45 are actively receiving interventions from the Assistant Practitioners during August 2026. Those waiting to access the core service continue to receive some intervention until they can be seen.

Impact:

- Communication needs are identified and addressed earlier
- Children receive support without requiring specialist thresholds to be met

- Improved language development supports readiness for learning and social interaction.

Expansion of WellComm screening is improving the identification of speech and language needs

The expansion of WellComm screening across settings and schools, initially by the virtual school, has strengthened the partnership's ability to identify speech, language and communication needs consistently and accurately.

The Virtual School has embedded WellComm screening for children newly entering care to support the early identification of speech, language and communication needs. In 2025/26, 29 children were referred to Speech and Language Therapy following screening, with 25 identified as requiring adaptive teaching approaches and additional support. This ensures communication needs are recognised early, and appropriate support is implemented promptly for some of Hull's most vulnerable children.

This is set for further expansion across all primary settings in the city. The use of a common screening tool enables practitioners to identify concerns earlier, implement targeted interventions and monitor progress effectively through the Graduated Approach.

Impact:

- earlier identification of speech, language and communication needs
- more consistent assessment practice across settings
- reduced risk of unmet communication needs impacting on educational progress

Sensory impairments are accurately identified, with appropriate support put in place to promote improved outcomes

Early Years children receive audiology screening, and referrals are made by Health into the Integrated Physical and Sensory Service (IPaSS) Hearing Impairment team, the collaboration ensuring children's needs are met as soon as they are identified. Support for Hearing Impaired children from IPaSS has been extended to include babies, where intervention has greatest impact, and a pre-school group has also been established. Children's language and communication are developed with impact measured through 'Success from the Start' assessment (see IPaSS annual report for detailed evidence of impact). 100% of deaf babies aged 0–3 years receive support through Success from the Start.

Referrals made into the IPASS service by health professionals are all actioned upon receipt. These are:

- NHS Speech and Language Therapists refer to the Language Unit
- NHS Audiology units refer into the Support Service for Deaf Children
- NHS Eye Clinics refer into the Vision Support Team. Through careful case management, there is currently no waiting list or delay in accepting these new referrals, whereby specific assessment of functional needs are assessed by each respective team

All IPaSS teams and SEN outreach services utilise the best available assessment tools to baseline and monitor children's progress towards optimum functioning and independence. A good example not just of assessments but of progress from baseline is available within the Language Unit section of the Annual report.

Children attending the Language Unit during the 2025-26 year have made an average progress of 26 months, over the course of the nine months attended. These assessments cover the areas of 'Reception to grammar', 'Expressive Language', 'Language Comprehension' and 'Word naming/sounds'.

Feedback is very strong also, with 91% of parents rating input from the Language Unit as 'excellent', 100% 'good or better', and 68% of school SENDCos rating the impact of the Language Unit on pupils as 'excellent', with 100% rating it as 'good or better'.

The New in Country pathway enables rapid identification of complex SEND needs

The SEND New in Country pathway ensures that children and young people arriving from overseas with potentially complex SEND needs are assessed quickly and effectively. The pathway removes barriers to support by enabling assessment and specialist involvement without requiring schools to first evidence a graduated response.

This ensures children can access education and appropriate provision as soon as possible following arrival in Hull.

Neurodiversity Core Needs Project

The partnership has launched a Core Needs Pilot across the seven highest-referring secondary schools in Hull. The initiative supports pupils, SENCOs, teaching assistants and families through community-based, early intervention approaches, helping schools understand and respond to needs without requiring a diagnostic outcome. Over the past nine months, more than 200 young people have accessed the service, with approximately 40-50% reporting that their needs were met without requiring referral to specialist diagnostic services.

School feedback

"All students seen so far have reported a positive response following the intervention. Many parents have also got in touch to state how thankful they are that their child has been seen, a plan is in place or current one has been verified and that their child feels more confident going forward. The process has also encouraged students to go away and consider the strategies mentioned and feel more empowered to use them in and out of school."

Young people said:

- *"Could talk to them about anything, really helpful"*
- *"Need to visit more often"*
- *"I felt like progress was finally made"*
- *"Helpful in getting the help I need"*
- *"Got a lot of pressure off my chest talking to someone that I felt I could trust"*
- *"Felt good to talk to someone who understood and helped"*
- *"Gave me tips that actually helped"*

Parents said:

- *"This will really help my child, very much appreciated"*
- *"Responsive and helpful strategies for school"*
- *"Wow... Please thank the clinician so much for us. So much understood in such a short time and very quick outcome letter by email. Thank you, this will really help X."*
- *"Very much appreciated. So glad for the help to be available."*
- *"I appreciate that there is a service that actually listens and sees these pupils rather than just what's written on a form."*

The success and innovation of the Core Needs Service have been recognised nationally, with the programme shortlisted for both the Nursing Times Awards and the HSJ Awards.

Impact:

- Faster identification of complex needs
- Reduced delays in accessing specialist assessment and provision
- Improved educational access and inclusion for newly arrived children and young people
- School-based needs-led support for neurodivergent young people

Assessment and the Graduated Response

Leaders have strengthened the quality and consistency of assessment within schools

Leaders have invested significantly in workforce development, specialist outreach and assessment tools to ensure children and young people's needs are accurately identified and responded to through a robust graduated approach. This has strengthened schools' ability to assess needs earlier, implement effective interventions and make informed decisions about provision. As a result, children and young people are increasingly receiving the right support at the right time, reducing barriers to learning and improving inclusion within mainstream settings.

The Graduated Approach provides a consistent framework for identifying need and evaluating impact

Hull's Graduated Approach has been reviewed and strengthened to include a range of evidence-based screening and assessment tools that support practitioners to identify need, monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

Regular reviews are taking place through the SEND Outreach Services, who are contracted to review and add to the Graduated Response at least once per term.

The framework promotes high-quality Assess–Plan–Do–Review (APDR) cycles and supports a shared understanding of effective SEND practice across all settings.

Impact:

- Greater consistency in SEND assessment across settings
- Improved quality of APDR cycles
- Earlier identification of unmet need
- Better evidence to inform intervention and provision planning

Investment in Cognition and Learning Outreach is strengthening assessment and intervention

Hull has expanded its SEND Outreach Service to include a dedicated Cognition and Learning Outreach Team, strengthening the identification and assessment of cognition and learning needs across the city. The team operates through a three-tier model, providing universal training, targeted consultation and specialist assessment and intervention.

This investment has increased schools' capacity to understand and respond to cognition and learning needs at an earlier stage, reducing delays in assessment and enabling evidence-based interventions to be implemented before difficulties become entrenched. The universal training offer is designed to increase knowledge and promote inclusive QFT, build staff confidence in identifying need in this area and provide practical advice on meeting such need, based upon evidenced based research.

Impact:

- Earlier identification of cognition and learning needs
- Improved assessment and intervention within mainstream schools
- Increased confidence and expertise amongst school staff
- Stronger inclusion and improved access to learning

CCET-trained SENCOs have increased schools' capacity to accurately assess cognition and learning needs

Hull's investment in the Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing (CCET) programme has enhanced schools' ability to undertake robust assessment of cognition and learning needs. Accredited SENCOs are able to use standardised assessment tools to identify learning profiles, assess barriers to learning and support the identification of specific learning difficulties.

The combination of CCET-trained SENCOs and specialist outreach support has improved the quality, consistency and timeliness of assessment across the partnership.

Impact:

- More accurate identification of learning needs
- Reduced reliance on external assessment pathways
- Earlier implementation of targeted support and intervention
- Improved confidence in assessment and decision-making within schools

Inclusion funding is allocated through a robust graduated approach

Leaders have established clear and consistent processes to ensure that inclusion funding is allocated based on accurately identified need. Requests for Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF) are considered through the multi-agency Early Years Allocation and Support Panel, providing appropriate scrutiny and oversight of decision-making.

To ensure providers understand thresholds and implement effective support before requesting additional funding, settings must first access Area SENCO advice and demonstrate a robust graduated response. This ensures that interventions are evidence-based, proportionate and focused on improving outcomes for children and young people.

Examples of support include:

- Tailored strategies to help children with additional needs thrive in early years settings.
- On-site visits to observe and advise practitioners on inclusive practices.
- Training sessions for staff to build confidence in supporting diverse developmental needs.
- Collaborative planning meetings with families and settings to ensure consistent approaches.
- Resource sharing, such as visual aids, sensory tools, and communication supports.
- Support during transitions, such as moving from nursery to school, to ensure continuity and emotional security

Impact

The effectiveness of this approach is evidenced by the reduction or removal of support packages where needs have reduced because of successful intervention. In 2025-26 following 896 reviews of support, 25 Early Years children had their allocated support package reduced or removed due to the positive impact of intervention, demonstrating that support is targeted effectively and helping children make progress without reliance on long-term additional funding.

The Area SENCOs work closely with the Educational Psychologists to ensure children with High levels of Need receive appropriate and timely interventions and assessment. In 2025/26 72 children were discussed during consultations, 30 children referred to the Developmental Clinic run by the Educational Psychologist. 87 SOGS assessments were undertaken by the Area SENCOs to support the work of the Educational Psychologists.

Educational Psychology support strengthens the accuracy and quality of assessment

Educational Psychologists support schools, families and professionals to develop a deeper understanding of children and young people's needs through consultation, planning meetings, training and statutory assessment activity. Termly Planning and Consultation Meetings provide timely access to specialist advice, enabling needs to be explored early and reducing the risk of issues escalating.

The Virtual School commissions Educational Psychology assessments and person-centred planning where additional assessment is required for children in

care. Regular supervision and case review arrangements ensure assessment findings are translated into effective provision and monitored for impact.

The Educational Psychology Service has strengthened the quality of statutory advice through a robust peer review and quality assurance process. This has improved the consistency, clarity and analytical depth of reports, ensuring psychological advice is evidence-informed, person-centred and clearly linked to outcomes and provision.

Feedback from schools, carers and Virtual School colleagues demonstrates that Educational Psychology involvement is having a positive impact on both practice and outcomes. Stakeholders consistently report feeling listened to and gaining a deeper understanding of children's needs, strengths and lived experiences. Advice is valued for being practical, accessible and action-focused, supporting more effective decision-making, higher-quality EHCPs and better-targeted provision. Schools describe increased confidence in meeting needs, while families report feeling reassured and better informed. Evidence from case feedback suggests that the implementation of recommendations has contributed to improved engagement, emotional regulation and participation in learning for some children and young people.

Impact

- Improved understanding of children and young people's needs by schools, families and professionals
- More holistic and psychologically informed assessments
- Higher-quality Educational Psychology advice that clearly links need, provision and outcomes
- Stronger EHCPs that better reflect individual need and support effective planning
- Increased confidence amongst parents, carers and school staff in implementing support strategies

"Thanks so much for the reports for [child] and [child]. They are both so useful for both school and parents"

"It all reads so well and is really accurate of his current needs"

"Just on a note to you a parent today told me your report was amazing and really captured/spent the time to reflect his true self so just so you know you are also having a positive impact too 😊"

In summary, leaders can demonstrate that early identification is increasingly effective across the partnership. Through integrated early years pathways, targeted screening programmes and specialist support services, children and young people's needs are being identified earlier and with greater accuracy. This enables support to be implemented more quickly, prevents escalation of need and contributes to improved inclusion, participation and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

EHCP Timeliness

Leaders have secured sustained improvement in EHCP timeliness through strengthened performance management and operational oversight

Leaders have secured demonstrable improvement in the timeliness of issuing EHCPs during 2026. The proportion of plans issued within the statutory 20-week timescale increased from 38% in January 2026 to 54% in May 2026, with a cumulative year-to-date performance of 46%.

This improvement reflects stronger strategic leadership, enhanced performance management and improved operational grip across the SEND system. Leaders have implemented tighter pathway management, strengthened tracking and escalation arrangements for statutory advice, and increased accountability across partner agencies. As a result, more children and young people are receiving their EHCPs within statutory timescales and delays across the assessment pathway are reducing.

Leaders have also successfully reduced the proportion of plans significantly exceeding statutory timescales, particularly those progressing beyond 30 and 40 weeks. This demonstrates that recovery activity is having a measurable impact on both current demand and historic backlog cases.

Leaders have robust oversight of demand and performance

Leaders have a clear understanding of the impact of increasing demand across the SEND system, including sustained growth in requests for EHC Needs Assessments and the increasing number of EHCPs maintained by the local authority.

Through improved data intelligence, strengthened performance reporting and regular scrutiny of timeliness and backlog profiles, leaders have established robust oversight of statutory processes. This intelligence is actively used to inform prioritisation, resource deployment and service improvement activity, ensuring that recovery actions are targeted, evidence-based and focused on improving outcomes for children and young people.

Impact

The improvement in EHCP timeliness is delivering tangible benefits for children, young people and their families.

Earlier access to support and provision

- More children and young people are receiving EHCPs within statutory timescales.
- Support, provision and placement decisions are being implemented more quickly.

Improved stability in education

- Earlier planning supports more effective placement matching and provision planning.
- Children experience greater consistency in education and fewer reactive approaches to support.

Improved parental confidence

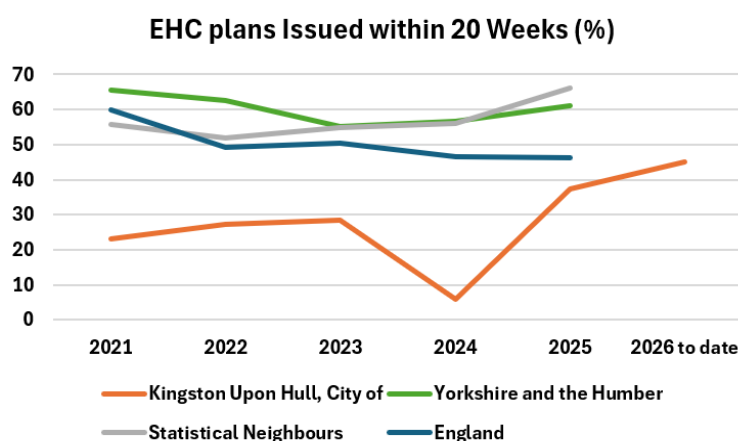
- Families receive greater clarity regarding timescales and decision-making processes.
- Reduced delays are contributing to improved confidence and engagement with the SEND system.

Stronger inclusion across the partnership

- Improved timeliness supports wider inclusion priorities and reduces the risk of needs escalating.
- Earlier intervention contributes to improved attendance, participation and engagement in education.

Evidence of Improvement

Measure	January 2026	May 2026
EHCPs issued within 20 weeks	38%	54%



EHCP Quality and Quality Assurance

Quality assurance activity undertaken during June and July 2026 indicates that the overall quality of EHCPs produced by the service is consistently good. Across the two-month period, audited plans achieved average scores of 76.2% in June and 77.1% in July, demonstrating sustained performance securely within the 'Good' range. In July, 92.6% of audited plans were judged Good or Outstanding, including 18.5% rated Outstanding, with no plans assessed as Inadequate. These findings provide strong assurance that the majority of EHCPs meet statutory requirements and effectively describe children and young people's needs, outcomes and provision.

Audit findings continue to demonstrate strong practice in the identification of needs, the effective use of professional advice and evidence, and the development of increasingly person-centred and outcome-focused plans. Outcomes remain a particular strength, with July audits evidencing average performance of 88% within Section E and increasing evidence of SMART, aspirational outcomes that are clearly linked to individual circumstances.

The strongest plans demonstrate a clear golden thread linking aspirations, identified needs, outcomes and provision, ensuring that support is tailored appropriately and focused on securing positive long-term outcomes for children and young people.

The findings reflect the positive impact of ongoing quality assurance, moderation and workforce development activity, which continue to strengthen consistency across the service. July's audit results demonstrate that strong performance is being maintained across key statutory sections, particularly Health and Social Care provision, which achieved average scores of 87% and 94% respectively. There is increasing evidence that caseworkers are effectively using professional advice to inform planning and are demonstrating a strong understanding of statutory requirements.

Quality assurance activity also provides leaders with a clear understanding of areas requiring further improvement. Consistent with June findings, Section F remains the principal area for development, although performance remains within the 'Good' range at an average score of 72%. Audits continue to identify variability in the specificity and quantification of provision, particularly where support is not sufficiently detailed in terms of what will be delivered, by whom, how frequently and for what duration. In addition, a minority of plans continue to include Quality First Teaching strategies or ordinarily available provision within Section F, creating a risk that statutory provision may become less clearly defined and enforceable.

Section B remains a secondary improvement priority. July audits identified examples where needs were not consistently separated from provision, where information from professional advice had not been fully reflected, or where language lacked sufficient clarity and precision. Addressing these issues will further strengthen the relationship between identified needs, outcomes and provision across the EHCP.

Leaders have responded proactively through targeted training, strengthened moderation processes, detailed audit feedback and focused support for caseworkers. Improvement activity remains centred on strengthening the quality of Sections B and F, improving the distinction between needs and provision, and ensuring statutory provision is specific, quantified and legally compliant. This work is further strengthening the alignment between Sections B, E and F and improving the consistency with which identified needs are translated into measurable outcomes and enforceable provision.

The service maintains a clear line of sight between quality assurance findings and improvement activity, demonstrating a culture of reflective practice and continuous improvement. The consistency of performance across June and July, together with the high proportion of plans judged Good or Outstanding, provides confidence that quality assurance arrangements are not only identifying areas for development but are actively driving improvements in the quality, consistency and statutory robustness of EHCPs. As a result, children and young people with SEND are increasingly receiving plans that are clear, person-centred and capable of securing effective support and positive outcomes.

Support Whilst Waiting

Leaders ensure children and young people receive appropriate support whilst awaiting EHCP completion

Leaders have ensured that children and young people receive appropriate, sustained support while awaiting the completion of their EHCP, minimising any gaps in provision and reducing the risk of unmet need. This is underpinned by strong partnership working with schools and settings, including agreed

approaches to maintain and enhance support throughout the assessment process.

Funding arrangements prevent delays in support

Where appropriate, funding is backdated to the statutory 20-week point, ensuring that provision is not delayed and that settings are supported to meet need without financial disadvantage. This approach enables children and young people to access appropriate support while statutory processes are being completed and ensures that support remains focused on need rather than process.

SENDCo networks provide timely multi-agency support and challenge

A fortnightly multi-agency network meeting brings together SENDCos and practitioners from education, health and social care to provide timely advice, challenge and shared problem-solving. This enables presenting needs to be addressed through evidence-based interventions and 'what works' strategies, with a clear focus on a needs-led approach rather than reliance on diagnosis. The network supports schools to identify practical solutions and implement support without delay.

Educational Psychology consultation strengthens early intervention and provision planning

Termly Planning and Consultation Meetings (PCMs) with Educational Psychologists provide structured opportunities for schools and settings to discuss individual pupils, explore presenting needs in depth and access specialist advice to inform targeted and effective provision. This approach strengthens early intervention, builds capacity within schools and ensures that children and young people continue to receive meaningful and appropriate support throughout the assessment journey.

Peer SENCO Mentor support

To strengthen the quality of SEND support at SENCO level and ensure that children and young people receive appropriate help at the earliest opportunity, Hull has established a Peer SENCO Mentor Support offer. Schools whose EHC Needs Assessment Request (EHCNAR) receives a decision not to proceed to statutory assessment are invited to attend a peer support session facilitated by experienced SENCOs and SEND leaders from across the city.

Between May 2025 and July 2026, 94 cases were discussed through this process, with representation from 49 schools. The sessions provide a reflective and solution-focused opportunity for SENCOs to consider the reasons for the decision, review current provision and identify further actions that may better meet the child or young person's needs.

Discussions focus on:

- Understanding the rationale for decisions not to assess
- Strengthening the quality and evidencing of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) cycle
- Evaluating the implementation and impact of interventions.
- Improving record keeping and evidence gathering.
- Identifying further support strategies and provision that can be implemented within a graduated response.
- Facilitating access to specialist advice and support services where appropriate.

The approach promotes professional collaboration, builds SENCO confidence and capability, and supports greater consistency in SEND practice across the city.

Impact

The Peer SENCO Mentor programme has strengthened the quality of SEND decision-making and graduated responses within schools. Feedback indicates that SENCOs value the opportunity to discuss individual cases with experienced peers, helping them to better understand statutory assessment thresholds and identify alternative pathways of support when an EHC needs assessment is not agreed.

The programme has improved understanding of the APDR process and supported schools to focus on the implementation and evaluation of interventions before pursuing further statutory processes. Through challenge, coaching and professional dialogue, SENCOs have been supported to consider how specialist recommendations, such as Educational Psychology advice, can be embedded and evidenced over time before additional referrals are made.

The sessions have also increased schools' awareness and utilisation of specialist support services, including Outreach, Speech and Language Therapy, Neurodiversity Services and Sensory Processing Services. This has enabled children and young people to access appropriate support more quickly and has reduced reliance on repeated statutory requests as the sole route to securing assistance.

Of the 94 cases discussed through the programme, 46 cases (49%) did not progress to a statutory assessment or EHC Plan, demonstrating that many children's needs were able to be met through strengthened ordinarily available provision, targeted interventions and specialist support within the graduated response. This reflects improved confidence amongst schools in identifying and

implementing effective SEND support and a greater understanding of when statutory assessment is, and is not, required.

Children, Young People & their families – Waiting Well Initiative

Recognising the impact that delays within the EHC Needs Assessment process can have on children, young people and their families, Hull City Psychological Service has introduced a proactive "Waiting Well" initiative. All families waiting 12 weeks or longer for Educational Psychology involvement receive direct contact from the Service.

This initiative aims to improve families' experience of the EHCNA process by maintaining communication during periods of delay, providing reassurance, acknowledging concerns and ensuring families remain informed and supported. In addition, the contact enables professionals to identify any changes in a child's needs, circumstances or levels of risk whilst they are waiting for assessment. Where appropriate, families are signposted to targeted support services, including SENDIASS, the Sleep Service, Sensory Processing Service and resources available through the Local Offer.

The initiative has strengthened our ability to identify and respond to emerging needs during waiting periods. Through these calls, significant changes in circumstances have been identified, including pupils on substantially reduced timetables, children experiencing repeated exclusions, and cases where educational placements have become unstable. This information has enabled timely escalation and information sharing with relevant professionals, ensuring that children with increasing vulnerability are identified earlier and appropriate support is considered before assessment takes place.

Feedback from families has been positive, with parents reporting that the contact has reduced anxiety and provided reassurance that their child's needs remain a priority. The initiative demonstrates our commitment to keeping children and families at the centre of the SEND system, mitigating the impact of delays wherever possible and ensuring that opportunities for early intervention are not missed.

Impact

- Improved communication and engagement with families during periods of delay
- Earlier identification of escalating needs and risks whilst children are awaiting assessment
- Increased access to advice, support and early help through targeted signposting
- Positive parental feedback, with families reporting reduced anxiety and greater confidence in the process
- Strengthened oversight of vulnerable children awaiting Educational Psychology involvement, supporting a more responsive SEND system

Support is needs-led rather than diagnosis-led

The partnership promotes a clear needs-led approach, ensuring that children and young people receive support based on identified needs rather than waiting for an EHCP to be finalised or a diagnosis to be secured.

Through multi-agency consultation, evidence-based interventions, specialist advice and agreed approaches across schools and services, support is implemented at the earliest opportunity, reducing the risk of needs escalating whilst assessments are underway.

As part of the neurodiversity waiting list support strategy, SEND Board members agreed to identify opportunities to reinforce the message that a diagnosis is not required to access support in school. Key stakeholders, including SENCOs and Neurodiversity Services staff, were also reminded of this message and how to provide accurate support to families.

Impact

Children and young people continue to receive timely and appropriate support throughout the EHCP assessment process. Schools are better equipped to meet need through access to specialist advice, multi-agency problem-solving and Educational Psychology consultation. As a result, children and young people experience fewer gaps in provision, earlier intervention and improved access to support while statutory assessment processes are completed. This reduces the risk of unmet need, strengthens inclusion and provides families with confidence that support is available throughout the assessment journey.

Health Advice and Assessment

Health advice is increasingly timely, high quality and makes a strong contribution to identifying and assessing need

Hull's strong partnership between SEND and Health services continues to drive significant improvements in both the quality and timeliness of health advice provided as part of the EHC Needs Assessment process.

A key development has been the introduction of weekly Health Clinics, providing SEND caseworkers with direct access to the Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) and Assistant DCO. These sessions enable health queries to be resolved quickly, support earlier clinical oversight, ensure that health needs are accurately reflected within EHCPs, and strengthen the quality, precision and person-centred nature of plans.

Although draft EHCPs are not routinely available at the point of panel consideration, increasing attendance at Health Clinics is creating valuable opportunities for health advice and proposed health provision to be reviewed and

signed off earlier in the process. This is strengthening the accuracy and consistency of health contributions before plans reach draft stage and is supporting a more proactive approach to improving the quality of final EHCPs.

As a result, EHCPs are increasingly holistic, health needs are clearly identified and specified, and families can be confident that health provision is fully considered throughout the assessment and review process.

Robust quality assurance arrangements are driving continuous improvement

The SEND Health Team has established a comprehensive Quality Assurance Framework, underpinned by weekly audits of all health advice submitted as part of EHC Needs Assessments. This provides a robust mechanism for monitoring both timeliness and quality, ensuring that health advice accurately describes children and young people's needs, identifies clear outcomes and specifies the provision required to meet those needs.

The quality assurance process has strengthened preparation for panel consideration by embedding consistent weekly review activity across all health advice. This provides greater assurance that reports are scrutinised before cases progress through decision-making processes, reducing the risk of incomplete or unclear health information being presented and supporting more effective panel discussions.

This strengthened oversight is delivering clear and measurable improvements. Quarter 1 2026/27 performance shows that 98.6% of health advice reports were completed and submitted to the local authority within the statutory six-week timeframe. Quality also remains exceptionally strong, with 99.31% of reports meeting the agreed quality benchmark. These outcomes demonstrate sustained improvement, effective clinical leadership and a strong commitment from health partners to supporting timely, high-quality EHCP decision-making.

Health partners provide timely, high-quality advice that supports effective decision-making

Health partners continue to make a strong contribution to improved SEND outcomes through the delivery of timely and high-quality advice. High levels of compliance with statutory timescales ensure that EHC Needs Assessments can progress efficiently and that children and young people receive the support they need without unnecessary delay.

The quality of health advice being submitted across the system is consistently strong, supported by the established audit framework and close partnership working between health and SEND services. Advice is increasingly outcome-focused, clearly identifies need, and provides specific recommendations

regarding health provision. This strengthens decision-making, supports effective multi-agency planning and contributes to more robust, person-centred EHCPs.

Investment in workforce development is strengthening SEND practice across the system

The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has demonstrated a strong commitment to workforce development through the delivery of regular SEND training opportunities for health providers, which continue to be well attended across the partnership.

In addition, targeted training has been developed for SENCOs to support the collation and presentation of health advice during annual reviews. This will help ensure that changes in health needs, outcomes and provision are identified more effectively and accurately reflected within EHCPs. The planned rollout through Autumn Term SENCO Forums, alongside supporting resources and training videos hosted on the Local Offer, will further extend the reach of this work and promote more consistent, high-quality health contributions across the SEND system.

Together, these developments demonstrate a mature and increasingly effective partnership between Health and SEND services, characterised by strong clinical leadership, rigorous quality assurance and a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Appropriate referral pathways support timely and effective Occupational Therapy assessment

Referral and assessment requests are received through the Integrated Front Door within EHASH and are screened prior to allocation to the Occupational Therapy Service. Close partnership working between Occupational Therapy and the Integrated Front Door ensures a shared understanding of referral thresholds and the Occupational Therapy remit, supporting appropriate referrals and reducing delays in accessing assessment.

Occupational Therapy leads maintain oversight of all referrals, providing assurance that children and young people are directed to the most appropriate support pathway at the earliest opportunity.

Robust systems ensure risk assessments and specialist reviews are completed in a timely manner

The Occupational Therapy Service has strengthened oversight of specialist assessments and reviews through the development of automated processes within Liquid Logic. Review dates for specialist beds, moving and handling

assessments and restrictive practices are automatically generated, ensuring that required reviews are systematically identified, monitored and allocated promptly.

This approach improves the timeliness of reviews, supports effective case management and reduces the likelihood of delays for children and young people requiring specialist equipment, intervention or risk management arrangements.

Impact

- 96.6% of health advice returned within statutory timescales
- High-quality and timely advice is contributing to improved EHCP timeliness
- Health needs are increasingly identified accurately and reflected within EHCPs
- 100% of CHCP reports, 90.5% of HUTH reports and 71.2% of HTFT reports were judged Outstanding through quality assurance processes
- Children and young people benefit from more holistic assessments and better-informed provision planning
- Families have greater confidence that health needs are understood and appropriately addressed through the EHCP process
- Appropriate referral pathways ensure children and young people access Occupational Therapy assessment and intervention in a timely manner.
- Automated review processes strengthen oversight of specialist assessments and reduce delays in risk assessment and review activity.
- Improved multi-agency collaboration supports more effective decision-making and better outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Social Care Advice for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments

Performance and Impact

Historically, social care advice provided as part of the EHCP needs assessment process was an underdeveloped area, with minimal formal performance reporting, limited quality assurance arrangements and insufficient strategic oversight. As a result, leaders did not have a clear understanding of the timeliness or quality of advice being provided and were therefore unable to systematically evaluate performance or drive improvement.

The introduction of performance monitoring during 2026 has addressed this gap and established the first robust baseline for measuring both timeliness and quality. Analysis identified that 43% of advice requests were completed within the statutory six-week timescale, with a further 7% completed shortly after the deadline. Whilst

this demonstrates that performance is not yet consistently meeting expectations, the availability of performance data has significantly strengthened leaders' understanding of the area and enabled the identification of clear priorities for improvement.

A key strength is the increased focus and oversight now being applied to social care advice within the SEND system. For the first time, performance is being systematically reviewed, creating greater transparency, accountability and opportunities for improvement. Leaders now have a clearer understanding of barriers affecting timeliness and quality and have established a targeted programme of work to address these issues.

Improving the quality and timeliness of social care advice will support more effective EHC needs assessments, ensuring that children and young people benefit from coordinated, outcomes-focused planning that accurately reflects their needs.

Leadership, Governance and Oversight

The allocation of Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) duties has been instrumental in strengthening leadership and oversight of this area. This role has addressed a significant gap within previous arrangements and demonstrates a clear commitment to improving the contribution of social care within the SEND system. Monthly performance information and completed advice submissions will now be routinely reviewed by the DSCO. This will provide greater oversight of both timeliness and quality, support the identification of emerging themes and enable learning to be shared across services.

Improvement Activity and Next Steps

Leaders have established a comprehensive improvement programme to address identified weaknesses and build on emerging strengths.

A request has been submitted to SPIB for the development of a dedicated Liquidlogic pathway for social care advice requests. The proposed pathway will strengthen workflow management, oversight, performance monitoring and quality assurance processes, providing improved visibility of requests and greater assurance regarding compliance with statutory timescales.

An updated end-to-end process will be developed to establish a consistent approach to the receipt, recording, completion and quality assurance of social care advice. Internal completion timescales will be revised to require advice to be completed within four weeks, creating capacity for management oversight and any necessary amendments before statutory deadlines are reached.

Practice guidance will be developed to strengthen understanding of expectations, support outcomes-focused practice and provide examples of high-quality advice.

This will improve practitioner confidence, promote consistency and strengthen the contribution social care makes to EHC needs assessments.

Managing Waiting Times

Leaders are actively mitigating the impact of waiting times through a needs-led approach

Leaders recognise that increasing demand within neurodevelopmental, mental health and therapy services continues to create pressure on assessment pathways. The partnership has therefore prioritised a needs-led approach, ensuring that children and young people receive support, intervention and reasonable adjustments whilst awaiting specialist assessment, rather than relying on diagnosis to access support.

This approach aims to reduce the risk of unmet need, maintain engagement in education and ensure that children and young people continue to receive appropriate support throughout their waiting journey.

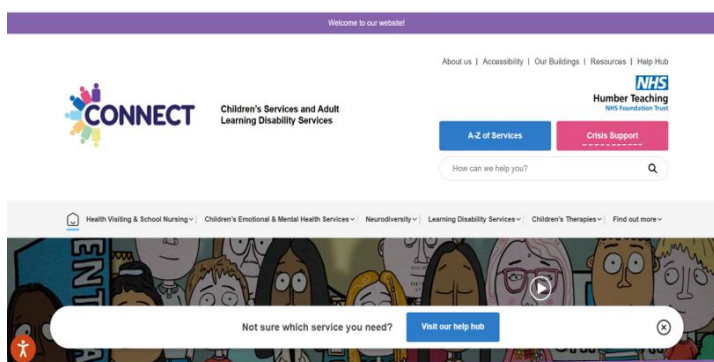
Support for children awaiting Autism and ADHD assessment

Significant progress has been made to strengthen support for children and young people awaiting autism and ADHD assessment, ensuring needs are identified and responded to as early as possible. A co-produced Wellbeing Whilst Waiting resource for young people and parents has been developed and is available through the Connect website, providing advice, support and signposting while families await assessment.

Following a comprehensive review in 2025 of risks for children and young people on the waiting list, a range of improvements were implemented to enhance support and ensure timely identification of those requiring additional intervention. These include

enhanced triage processes, use of expedite criteria for assessment/intervention, consultation appointments for SENCOs and families, and clear routes for identifying children and young people who may require an expedited assessment or support. All individuals on the waiting list receive regular text communications providing waiting time updates and signposting to relevant support and information.

Additional support is available through drop-in sessions at Parent Carer Forum groups, a dedicated duty line staffed by experienced practitioners, including a



MIND support worker, and a range of workshops available to those awaiting ADHD intervention. Families can also access sensory processing services, including parent training sessions.

The enhanced front door triage process has been particularly valued by schools:

"I wanted to share how fantastic the Neurodiversity Screening Service has been for our academy. The work you do is not only invaluable to us as a School but, more importantly, essential for our pupils. Referring students to other services for additional support ensures that they have the appropriate strategies in place to succeed in education. Parents and students have expressed how much they value this service."

To further strengthen early identification, a digital Do-IT Profiler tool is being introduced to help schools and families identify strengths and areas of need, enabling targeted interventions and reasonable adjustments at an earlier stage. The platform will also support a more efficient and transparent assessment process by bringing together information from multiple sources and providing clear updates on assessment progress.

Children and young people awaiting ADHD intervention are offered a review of their needs through a digital screening process. This enables triage by qualified health professionals and identification of those who may benefit from non-pharmacological support, including workshops, CBT and other psychological interventions. Referral criteria for pharmacological ADHD interventions have also been refined to ensure children access the most appropriate support pathway. In partnership with Matthew's Hub, all parents and young people on the waiting list have been offered access to ADHD workshops.

The Neurodiversity Service duty line continues to provide advice and support to parents, professionals and young people, while also helping to identify children and young people whose presentation indicates a need for more urgent assessment or intervention.

Support for children and young people awaiting Speech and Language Therapy

Children and young people awaiting Speech and Language Therapy assessment are supported through a needs-led model designed to reduce delays in identifying and responding to communication needs.

Children waiting for assessment by Speech and Language Therapy and Neurodiversity Services receive a single assessment by a dual-trained therapist, supporting early identification, reducing duplication and ensuring that support can be implemented at the earliest opportunity. This specific dual assessment pathway has resulted in earlier intervention and reduced waiting times from 150 to 38 weeks.

Support for children and young people awaiting mental health support

While awaiting treatment, young people receive ongoing support through a range of interim measures designed to maintain wellbeing, provide practical resources, and identify any changes in need. This includes information letters every four weeks with signposting to relevant resources and websites, alongside support from a dedicated Mind worker who maintains contact and provides tailored materials to help prepare for therapy.

Waiting lists are reviewed regularly to identify young people who may benefit from Mental Health Support Team (MHST) interventions before accessing CAMHS treatment. For urgent cases, safety plans are implemented and scheduled welfare calls are provided until a Family Partnership appointment becomes available. Regular telephone reviews are also undertaken to monitor wellbeing and identify any emerging or changing needs.

Where appropriate, consultation-based interventions may be offered as an alternative to direct therapeutic work. Young people, families, and professionals also have access to a duty clinician who can respond to questions, concerns, and requests for advice. In addition, services continue to explore opportunities to expand group-based interventions to provide further support during waiting periods.

Impact

Children and young people are increasingly supported through needs-led pathways whilst awaiting specialist assessment and intervention. This ensures that support is not dependent on diagnosis and helps schools and families implement strategies and adjustments that respond to presenting needs.

The partnership has strengthened access to early intervention, improved support available to schools and families and increased the range of resources available to children and young people whilst waiting for specialist services.

Children in need of more urgent assessment/intervention are responded to. Multi agency pathways have been developed to respond as a partnership, supporting needs led not diagnosis led support.

Governance, Oversight and Management of Health Waiting Times

Health waiting lists are subject to robust governance and oversight arrangements within Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust and across the local SEND partnership. Performance, activity and waiting times are monitored through the Trust's Operational Delivery Group and associated performance reporting structures, with additional scrutiny provided through the SEND Delivery Group and SEND Strategic Board.

Performance monitoring includes:

- Monthly reporting on waiting list volumes, waiting times and trajectory performance.
- Monitoring of first and second contacts, including the number of children waiting beyond national and local thresholds.
- Targeted oversight of children waiting over 52 weeks and specific monitoring of CAMHS and Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) waiting times exceeding 18 weeks.
- Weekly and bi-weekly operational waiting list review meetings involving service leads and the Trust Access and Performance Manager to ensure timely identification and management of pressures.

Risk Identification and Escalation

Children and young people awaiting assessment or intervention are actively monitored for risk. Concerns are identified through duty systems, single points of contact, professional referrals and service-to-service communication. Dedicated clinical capacity is allocated to triage and review cases to ensure emerging risks are identified promptly and that children requiring more urgent intervention can be prioritised.

Services operate clear escalation and prioritisation arrangements, including expedite criteria where clinical need or vulnerability indicates that accelerated access is required. Service-level risks are escalated through Trust governance processes and are routinely reported to the SEND Delivery Group and SEND Strategic Board, ensuring oversight of both operational and strategic risks associated with waiting times.

Multi-Agency Working and Support Whilst Waiting

A range of arrangements are in place to support children, young people and families whilst they wait for assessment or intervention. This includes regular communication with families, access to duty services for both professionals and parents, and close collaboration between CAMHS, Neurodiversity, Looked After Children and Outreach teams through established multidisciplinary forums.

Multi-agency review arrangements support ongoing monitoring of need and facilitate timely intervention where circumstances change. These include:

- CAMHS involvement within the Early Help and Safeguarding Hub (EHASH)
- Outreach Partnership meetings
- SEND Hub and Neurodiversity consultation pathways
- SENCO consultation arrangements

- Neuro Core Needs work within schools
- Established consultation routes through school nursing and other health professionals working in education settings

These arrangements help ensure that needs are reviewed regularly, that support can be accessed while children remain on waiting lists, and that concerns can be escalated quickly where required.

Prioritisation of Vulnerable Children and Young People

Priority pathways are in place to ensure that vulnerable children and young people receive timely consideration and access to support. This includes children looked after, children at risk of exclusion, and children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The Designated Clinical Officer (DCO), SEND services, CAMHS and Neurodiversity teams work collaboratively to provide oversight of these cases and ensure that vulnerability and risk are appropriately reflected within prioritisation decision. In areas with high waiting times, such as neurodiversity, specialist MDTs have been established to open up opportunities for shared understanding and support planning, an example being the LAC/Neuro MDT. The duty service and frequent text communication to those on the waiting lists also supports identification of those in need of more urgent support.

Initiated by NHSE the Trust now also reviews the number of cases over 104 weeks that have not had a service contact. This ensures clear oversight of children who are on the Autism/ADHD waiting list and then require another service, these cases are prioritised for a contact.

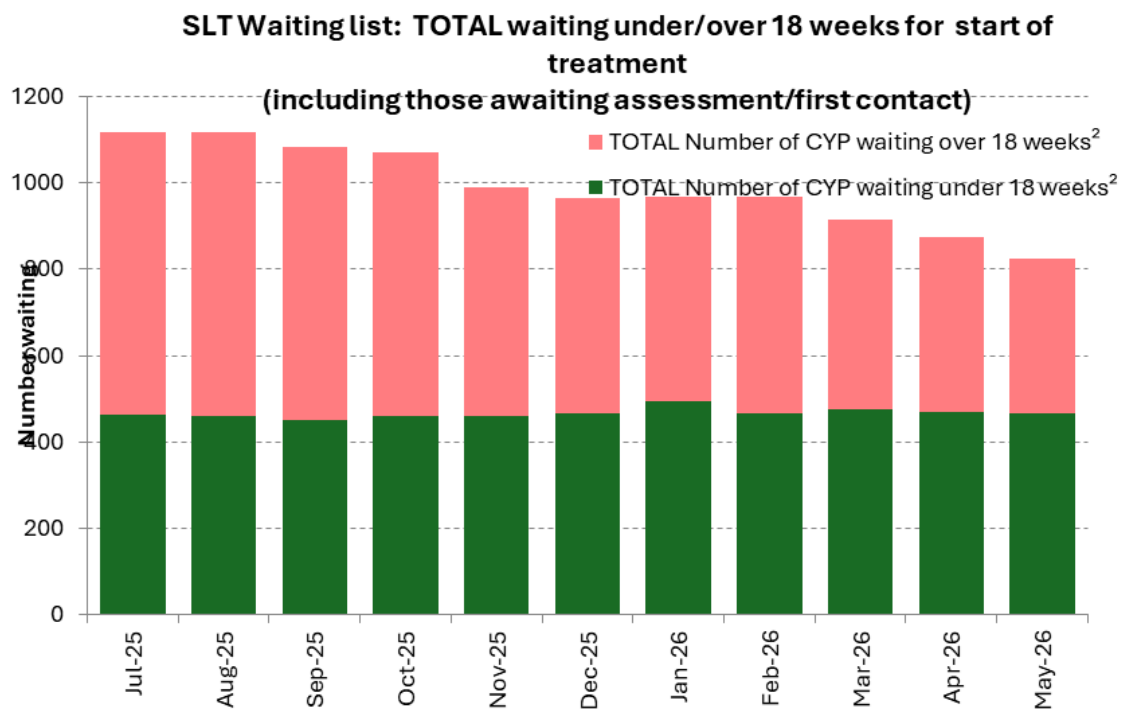
The ADHD Intervention Team has worked collaboratively with the Royal College of Psychiatrist on a quality improvement project to embed a proactive review process for all children and young people (CYP) who are awaiting ADHD intervention and CAMHS services, regardless of the order in which they access support. Each case is triaged and considered through a dedicated multidisciplinary team (MDT) forum, ensuring that needs are identified early, risks are appropriately managed, and young people receive the most suitable support and pathway planning while they await intervention.

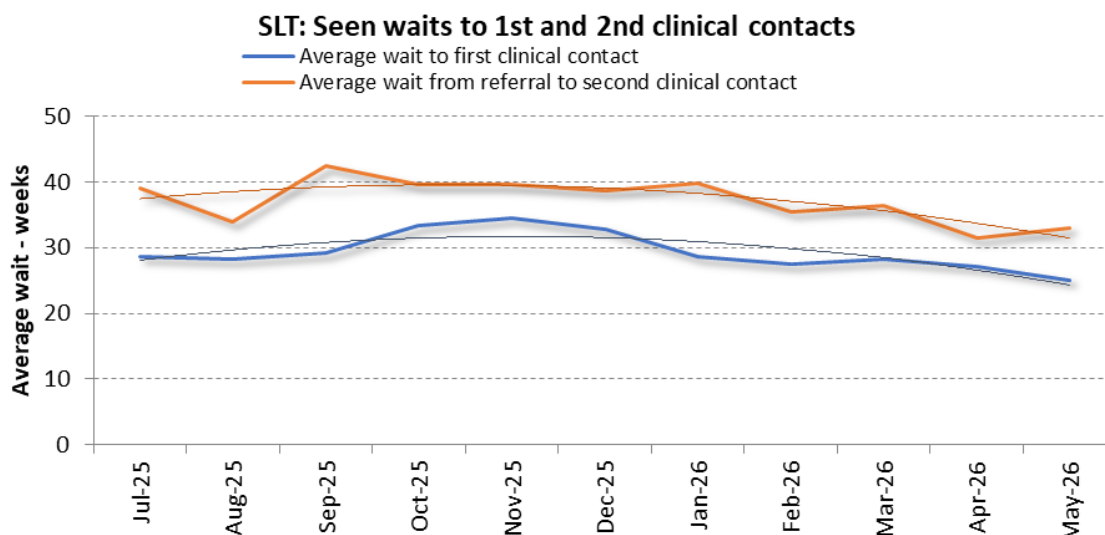
Collectively, these governance, monitoring and escalation arrangements provide assurance that waiting lists are actively managed, risks are identified and mitigated, and the most vulnerable children and young people receive a coordinated and proportionate response whilst awaiting support.

April to June 2026 data shows a reduction in CAMHS referrals alongside an increase in referrals to Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs). This suggests that earlier access to mental health support within schools may be helping to address needs at an earlier stage, reducing the demand for more specialist CAMHS interventions. The trend provides encouraging evidence of the effectiveness of

early intervention approaches in preventing escalation and supporting young people to access the right care at the right time.

Community CAMHS	% Acc Change	- 41.4%	- 25.2%	- 18.4%
MHST	% Acc Change	23.5%	48.8%	90.7%





Autism and ADHD waiting times

Autism Assessments

- Current waiting time: approximately 156 - 169 weeks
- Total children awaiting assessment: 2224
- Children waiting over one year: 1487

ADHD Assessments

- Current waiting time: approximately 156 – 169 weeks
- Total children awaiting assessment: 954
- Children waiting over one year: 609

Reducing waiting times remains a key priority, and ongoing pathway redesign is focused on ensuring that children and young people receive support at the point of identified need, prior to referral where appropriate. Assessment pathways are increasingly embedding digital solutions to improve the efficiency of assessments while maintaining high standards of quality.

The ADHD and Autism service is designed to ensure that CYP requiring a dual assessment can access both assessments without experiencing additional waiting times. Decisions regarding dual assessment are based on the functional impact of symptoms on the individual child.

Although demand continues to be high, waiting time trends are performing better than anticipated. Over the past six months, waiting list numbers have remained stable, with some months showing a reduction in overall demand.

The Learning Disability Service continues to reduce waiting times for assessment and intervention

The Learning Disability Service has made steady progress in reducing waiting times for assessment and intervention through delivery of its Recovery Plan. This work has successfully reduced waits exceeding 52 weeks and continues to improve timeliness across the pathway.

The current longest wait for intervention is 39 weeks, with those children already allocated to upcoming intervention programmes. At present, 19 children are awaiting intervention and waiting times continue to improve month-on-month.

Impact

- Elimination of waits exceeding 52 weeks
- Longest current wait reduced to 39 weeks
- Only 19 children awaiting intervention
- Waiting times continue to improve month-on-month
- Improved access to assessment and intervention for children and young people with learning disabilities.

Leaders can demonstrate that children and young people's needs are increasingly identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective manner.

Strong multi-agency working, investment in early intervention, enhanced assessment capacity and improving statutory processes have strengthened the partnership's ability to identify and respond to need at an earlier stage. Whilst challenges remain within some specialist health pathways due to increasing demand, leaders have a clear understanding of these pressures and have implemented robust mitigation to ensure support remains needs-led rather than diagnosis-led. Consequently, children and young people are increasingly accessing support earlier, benefiting from more accurate assessment and experiencing improved inclusion, participation and outcomes.

5. Children and young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support

Co-production is empowering young people to shape their support

Hull has demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring that the voices of children and young people are central to the design and delivery of SEND services. A powerful example of this is the development of a co-produced film created by children and young people with SEND, bringing their lived experiences to life and illustrating the difference that timely support and reasonable adjustments can make.

Young people were involved throughout every stage of the project, including developing characters, creating storylines and identifying the key messages they wanted schools, families and professionals to understand. As a result, the resource provides an authentic representation of the experiences of children and young people in Hull and demonstrates the Local Area's commitment to listening to and acting upon their views.

Building on the successful collaboration between Hull City Council and Humber NHS Foundation Trust through the Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) programme, the resource promotes inclusive practice and reinforces the importance of early identification and support.

Families were also involved in a review of the SEND Outreach Services, looking to identify the strengths of the current services and the gaps through a consultation process. These gaps formed part of the new service moving forward, in which the Local Authority and Multi-Academy Trusts increased the Outreach Services offer to support children and young people.

New animation promotes inclusion in schools



Impact

- Children and young people actively influence how SEND support is developed and communicated.
- Young people report feeling heard, valued and represented.
- Schools have access to an authentic resource that promotes understanding of lived experience.

- Families are better informed about support available through ordinarily available provision and the graduated approach.
- Children and young people see evidence that their views lead to tangible change.

Expansion of the SEND Outreach Services offer. 419 children and young people supported within one term.

The Co-production Charter Underpins Person-Centred Planning Across the Partnership

The principles of Hull's Co-production Charter are promoted across services and provide a common framework for participation, engagement and shared decision-making.

Parents and carers are recognised as experts in their children and are actively involved in shaping support. Within Early Years services, all support plans are co-produced with families, ensuring that learning and development can be reinforced consistently at home and within educational settings. Parents also participate in the planning and delivery of multi-agency SEND training.

Across the partnership, co-production is increasingly recognised as a fundamental component of effective service delivery rather than an additional activity.



Impact

- Parents and carers play an active role in shaping support.
- Services are increasingly designed with families rather than for families.
- Consistent approaches to co-production are developing across the Local Area.
- Children and young people benefit from support that reflects their individual strengths, priorities and aspirations.

Feedback from Expert by Experience (age 17) *"I am an expert by experience with the sensory outreach team. I personally think that the service will support*

numerous children who struggle with sensory difficulties in schools. I have really enjoyed helping with the training sessions and coproducing the training package. In the training sessions, I talk about my personal experiences with sensory difficulties and how schools could support me with them. The members of staff on the training are able to ask me questions on my experiences. I find that they really understand sensory difficulties and how they can support others based off my experiences. It is so good to see it all come together and learn more."

Parent and Young Person Voice Drives Quality and Ambition in EHCPs

Hull has embedded a culture where the voices of children, young people and parents are the starting point for EHCP quality assurance and improvement.

Through the multi-agency EHCP audit process, parental views are actively sought, shared and given equal weight alongside professional contributions. Every audit begins with consideration of the child's or young person's views, ensuring that quality assurance activity remains firmly rooted in lived experience.

This approach has been recognised positively by the Department for Education SEND Adviser:

"Discussions are focused not only on the quality of plans and provision but also on aspirations, outcomes and the difference support is making to children's lives."

Impact

- Children and young people are increasingly visible within decision-making processes.
- Parents have confidence that their voices influence decisions and outcomes.
- EHCPs are increasingly person-centred and outcome focused.
- Professionals maintain a strong focus on aspirations and long-term success.
- Multi-agency auditing is improving the quality and consistency of EHCPs.
- Plans increasingly reflect what is important to children and families.

Parent and Young Person Voice increases confidence in Transition

By actively involving young people and their families in transition planning, the Hull Organisational Support for Transitions (HOST) project has ensured that young people's strengths, needs and aspirations are understood well in advance of their move to secondary school.

Impact

- **Greater parental/carers confidence and involvement to support and advocate for their child.** Parents/carers contribute to planning and reported feeling heard, valued and reassured. HOST (the EP-led Year 6-7 transition programme for SEND Support pupils) helped some parents identify transition support and gave them a clearer understanding of how to advocate for their child's needs.
- **Meaningful pupil voice and increased confidence:** Capturing pupil voice placed pupils at the centre of transition planning, which was linked to increased confidence about moving to secondary school.
- **Increased confidence through planned transition support:** Both schools and parents/carers reported that the HOST process was reassuring for the young people through organising support and increased opportunities for familiarisation visits for the young people to feel more confident during transition week.
- **Broader impact on school practice:** Focusing on strengths frames the pupil positively during the transition planning with secondary school. School staff were upskilled through modelling of approaches and sharing of best practice, including a pupil voice toolkit developed by Hull City Psychological Service. Tools and approaches discussed during meetings were used to support the wider year six cohort, suggesting that the project contributed to the development of more inclusive transition practice across schools.

Parent feedback:

"I was able to provide additional support to my son as part of the transition process that I otherwise would not have considered."

"Have a face-to-face conversation with someone who is able to listen and educate on my child's emotional needs."

"Very good, nice to feel supported, as a parent I feel like we have been listened to and heard on what is best for [my child] going into secondary school."

Partners Ensure Barriers to Communication Are Removed

The Local Area recognises that meaningful participation is only possible when communication barriers are addressed effectively. Across education, health and social care there are strong examples of inclusive communication approaches that enable children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.

All Hull schools are registered with Widgit and the resource is increasingly being used across wider services, including social care assessments, to support children with communication needs.

Training in Exchanging Pictures to Communicate (EP2C) has been accessed by all academy trusts, strengthening the ability of schools to support children and young people with speech, language and communication needs.

Impact

- More children and young people can communicate their views and experiences.
- Communication barriers are reduced across services.
- Participation opportunities are more accessible and inclusive.
- Person-centred planning is strengthened across education, health and care.

Parents Influence Service Design and Improvement

The Early Years Parents United groups provide a strong example of parents influencing service development and delivery.

The groups enable parents and carers to work alongside practitioners to review services, shape improvements and influence training and support programmes. Additional groups have been established across the west, north and east of the city to widen participation and ensure opportunities are accessible to families across Hull.

In response to parent feedback requesting more accessible communication, the Early Years Team created a dedicated Parents United Facebook page.

During 2025/26

- Reach increased by 38%.
- Engagement increased by 291%

Impact

- Parents actively influence service development.
- Communication between families and services has improved.
- Services are increasingly informed by lived experience.
- More parents have opportunities to contribute to decision-making.

Feedback

“My first visit to parents united I met E; she made me feel so welcome, she had a warm calming presence and listened to me unravel (as a send parent) at the start of my journey. It was so incredibly overwhelming, but she and A made me feel at ease gave me great advice, sign posted me to other services and actually made me feel like I’m not going crazy; I’m on burnout! Every barrier I’ve met I’ve attended the groups and been given great support and advice along the way. I’m still very

much at the start of my send journey, however; I feel stronger and supported by E and the Parents United team. Thank you for genuinely caring for us send parents."

The Voice of Babies and Young Children is Actively Heard

Hull has developed innovative approaches to understanding and responding to the voice of babies and very young children.

The Local Authority, University of Hull, Wilberforce College and Goodwin Development Trust have collaborated with The Herd Theatre Company to develop and pilot an observation tool that supports practitioners to "tune in" to what babies and young children communicate through their play, behaviour and interactions.

Weekly sessions delivered at Octagon Family Hub enable children to participate in creative activities including music, dance and art. Children's responses influence both immediate practice and future programme design.

This represents the Lundy Model in practice, ensuring that even the youngest children are afforded meaningful opportunities to influence their experiences.

Impact

- Babies and young children influence service delivery
- Practitioners have improved understanding of children's communication
- Children's interests and preferences shape provision
- Participation is embedded from the earliest years

Children's Disability Services have been shaped by families

Within Children's Disability Services, audits demonstrate increasingly child-centred assessments, creative direct work with children and stronger transition planning. Short Breaks and Continuing Care packages have become more personalised through greater flexibility in support arrangements. Families can access a wider range of support options, enabling provision to be tailored around individual circumstances and outcomes.

Welfare Rights advisers also attend Children's Disability Short Breaks and Continuing Care Panels, helping families maximise access to financial support.

Additionally, following the restructuring of the Transport Service in 2025, parent surgeries were introduced to enable families to share experiences and influence service improvements directly. Feedback obtained through these sessions has informed service redesign and contributed to a significant reduction in complaints.

Impact

- Families have increased choice and control
- Support is increasingly personalised and responsive
- Services adapt in response to feedback
- Children and families experience more flexible and accessible support

Parent feedback is directly influencing service improvement

Young People Influence Strategic Decision-Making Across the Local Area

Guided by the Lundy Model & and our 'Hull Path to Participation', Hull's Youth Parliament continues to create meaningful opportunities for young people to influence decisions that affect their lives.

Alongside city-wide Youth Parliament events, additional opportunities have been created through holiday sessions and targeted engagement activity. Locality and School based 'Pop-Up Parliaments' have enabled us to reach young people with SEND – in community settings and special schools – to seek their views and opportunities to have influence. The (external) Voice & Influence Partnership have agreed a focus on enabling youth participation as part of the SEND Reform process – the opportunity to ensure what young people tells us can and will inform our SEND Reform planning. Further capacity is built into the 'Youth Participation Team' to further reach children and young people with SEND - and parents - to ensure they can influence decision making and shape their communities and future opportunities. This will extend to bespoke 'Pop-Up SEND Parliaments' and lead on a SEND specific Young People's Voice & Influence Plan.

Young people have contributed to work on food inequality, community priorities and future planning through initiatives such as Make Your Mark, in which 3,046 young people participated.

Examples included:

- More accessible venues
- Greater influence over agenda-setting
- Wider participation in local government decision-making

Impact

- Young people influence strategic priorities
- Participation opportunities continue to expand

- Young people can demonstrate the impact of their contributions
- Decision-making is increasingly informed by youth voice

Young People Are Shaping Their Communities and Future Opportunities

Young people across Hull are increasingly influencing wider community development, inclusion and future opportunities. The Young Mayor led a city-wide anti-racism campaign which resulted in the development of an anti-racism policy for schools and an awareness campaign that received national recognition through the Time for Action Award.

Through the Generation Hull programme, young people are influencing creative opportunities and career pathways across the city. A Creative Voice and Influence Access Plan now operates across 18 schools. Young people are also influencing environmental priorities through the Climate Changemakers programme, working alongside local employers to raise awareness of sustainability and green careers.

Impact

- Young people influence change within their communities
- Participation strengthens confidence, leadership and aspiration
- Young people contribute to more inclusive and equitable communities
- Opportunities support future employability, creativity and civic engagement

Overall Evaluation

Children, young people and families play a meaningful role in shaping services and influencing decision-making across the Local Area. Co-production is increasingly embedded within strategic planning, service design and individual support arrangements. Strong systems are in place to capture and respond to lived experience, barriers to participation are actively addressed and children, young people and families can demonstrate how their contribution has influenced change. As a result, services are becoming increasingly person-centred, responsive and ambitious, ensuring that children and young people with SEND are heard, valued and actively involved in decisions that affect their lives.

6. Children & young people receive the right help at the right time

Leaders have established effective multi-agency systems to ensure children & young people receive the right support at the earliest opportunity

Hull has strengthened its early intervention and graduated response through a highly effective multi-agency network panel, ensuring that children and young people access the most appropriate support at the earliest opportunity. Through bookable consultations, SENCOs can draw upon the expertise of partners from education, health and social care, creating a coordinated response to need and ensuring provision is driven by a shared understanding of the child or young person.

This approach has reduced fragmented and duplicated referrals, replacing a scattergun approach with a more strategic and coordinated pathway to support. The panel provides a single point of discussion where needs can be considered holistically, enabling services to identify barriers, coordinate interventions and strengthen Assess–Plan–Do–Review (APDR) cycles.

In 2025, the panel was strengthened through the introduction of a dedicated pathway for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, ensuring vulnerability is identified early and preventative action is taken.

Alongside this, Hull has strengthened its Learner of Concern process for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). This process enables schools to escalate concerns where needs are increasing, progress is limited despite support, or there is heightened risk of placement breakdown, poor attendance or exclusion. SEND caseworkers are linked to individual schools and hold termly support meetings to review pupils of greatest concern. Through a structured RAG-rating process, emerging risks are identified, mitigations agreed and multi-agency support coordinated.

Impact

- Children and young people receive earlier and more coordinated support.
- Barriers to learning are identified and addressed before needs escalate.
- Multi-agency oversight ensures vulnerable pupils do not fall through gaps in provision.
- Schools receive timely support to meet increasingly complex needs.
- Review and challenge processes have strengthened the effectiveness of APDR cycles.
- Exclusion rates for pupils with EHCPs, across all types of providers in the city, sit below England averages.

Increasing demand for support in the Early Years is being met through effective early intervention

Leaders have maintained a strong focus on ensuring that increasing levels of need within the Early Years sector are identified and supported at the earliest opportunity.

By the end of 2025/26, 1,500 Early Years children were receiving support, representing a slight decrease of 77 compared with the previous year but 355 more than in 2022/23. This reflects both increasing and continuing need and the effectiveness of the partnership's identification and intervention pathways.

Of over 980 requests for assessment received between June 2025 and May 2026, 56% were from schools, 14% from nursery providers and 22% from parents/carers. 26% of the requests related to children and young people of pre-statutory school age (stable from the previous 12 months) whilst there was an increase to 51% for primary aged pupils.

The Early Years SEND Focus group meets termly to ensure that the needs of the service is reflected in service delivery and development. The group comprises SENCOs and managers from both the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings and schools, providing a valuable forum for collaboration, consultation and the sharing of good practice. The group's contributions help to shape and form service provision, ensuring support remains responsive to the needs of the children, families and all settings.

Feedback:

From a mainstream's school perspective, it has been incredibly useful to work within the Early Years SENCo focus group. It has enhanced relationships between settings, encouraged improved transition opportunities, and strengthened the approach to early pathways of support.

Within a school where there are 1 out of every 4 children who present with additional needs, it has been vital to prepare our provision to suit and meet a range of needs. Having the support of the Early Years and Access Team has been vital in us providing this and improving transition. Being part of the focus group, has given us a voice to change and adapt processes to meet our settings, and to support others.

Impact

- More children receive support before needs escalate
- Early intervention is improving readiness to learn
- Increasing levels of need are being identified and responded to effectively

Children with speech, language and communication needs receive timely support

The partnership has prioritised the early identification and support of speech, language and communication needs.

Training has been delivered to the Health and Development Practitioners (HDP) in the Health Visiting team to implement Let's Play, a foundation intervention for children 12-24 months. Any child identified with a communication delay through their 12-month ASQ will receive home based input to support adult child interaction from an HDP. A clinical decision will then be made if discharge or onward referral into First Steps or SaLT is required based on outcome. This will help to increase capacity of APs moving forward.

The First Steps to Communication pathway ensures that children with mild to moderate speech, language and communication needs who do not meet specialist Speech and Language Therapy thresholds are identified quickly and supported through integrated intervention pathways. Children are directed to the service best placed to meet their needs, including Speech and Language Therapy, Family Hubs and the 0–19 Health Service.

The Speech and Language team have enhanced the triage process to include this ensures that advice and support is given at the point of triage.

The connect website has also been enhanced to support Speech and Language needs. In 2025 the Speech and Language pages received over 21,334 views.

Impact

- Children with emerging communication needs receive support earlier.
- Fewer children wait for specialist intervention before support begins.
- Practitioners are better equipped to deliver communication interventions.
- Children develop stronger communication skills and improved readiness for learning.

Children and young people receive support based on need rather than diagnosis

The Local Area has strengthened support for neurodiverse children and young people through a needs-led approach that ensures help is available without requiring families to wait for diagnostic outcomes.

Matthews Hub now provides early intervention support as part of the core need projection in secondary schools, the service is delivered by a neurodivergent workforce, bringing lived, academic and professional expertise. Young people can access peer mentoring, coaching, advice, support and opportunities to develop social connections. No diagnosis is required to access this service.

This work complements the wider neurodiversity pathway and reinforces the partnership's commitment to ensuring children and young people receive the right support at the right time.

Impact

- Improved access to peer support and mentoring.
- Increased confidence and wellbeing for neurodiverse children and young people.
- Reduced isolation and improved opportunities for social connection.
- Increased support available to families following diagnosis.

Emotional wellbeing support is available at the earliest opportunity

The partnership has invested significantly in emotional wellbeing and mental health support, ensuring children and young people can access intervention before difficulties escalate.

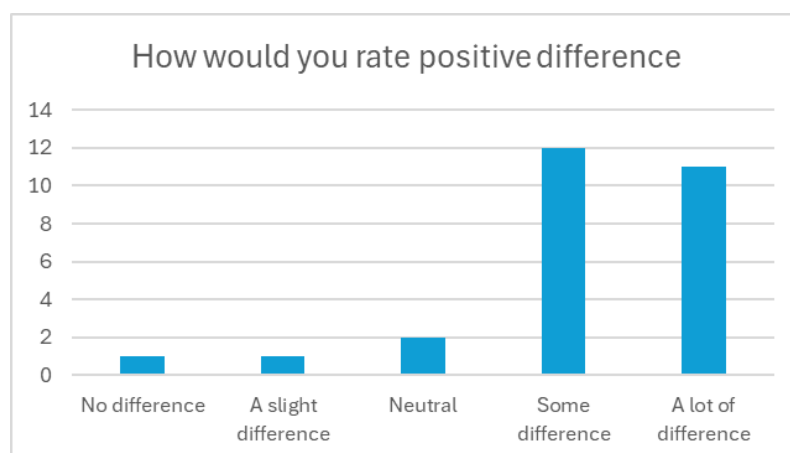
Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs)

ELSAs support vulnerable learners to develop resilience, emotional regulation, confidence and a sense of belonging.

Feedback from schools, families and children demonstrates that ELSA interventions:

- Help children build trusting relationships with adults
- Improve self-esteem, confidence and emotional regulation
- Support attendance and engagement in learning
- Improve behaviour and peer relationships
- Strengthen family engagement and support

Children report feeling more confident, better able to manage anxiety and more connected to their peers following intervention



“So now I've got to the point where they are comfortable talking and they come to me when they need me....I don't think it's helpful for them to move on and have to start that relationship again and not trust again”

“A child in year 6 told me that they will pass their SATs because of the work we did back when they were in year 5. To have this kind of impact that lasts on a child is huge”.

“I feel more confident now I have made a new group of friends”

“When a child who could not cope coming into school due to separation anxiety, is now back in class and moving forward like their peers.”

“The behaviour points have gone down.... And that has been noted by the heads of houses and things like say that.”

“Staff wanting to refer students for support. Teachers and head of years wanting to provide support for those struggling. Some students are asking to be referred from what they've heard of other students' experiences.

Hull Attachment, Resilience and Trauma (HART)

HART consultations support school staff and practitioners to develop a shared understanding of children's emotional and relational needs. Through multi-agency consultation and trauma-informed planning, professionals are better equipped to understand and respond to the lived experiences of vulnerable children and young people.

Feedback demonstrates that HART consultations:

- Increase practitioner confidence
- Strengthen trauma-informed responses
- Improve multi-agency planning
- Help children feel more understood, settled and supported

Mental Health Support Teams

Mental Health Support Teams now provide coverage across:

- All mainstream secondary schools and sixth forms
- 2 of the 4 mainstream colleges
- 21 primary schools
- 4 special schools
- 2 alternative provisions
- 6 post 16 Independent training providers

Practitioners provide prevention, early intervention and targeted support for children experiencing mild to moderate emotional wellbeing and mental health needs. In addition, 96% of eligible settings have received Department for Education funding for Senior Mental Health Lead training, significantly above national levels.

Schools can also access support through the wider Thrive partnership including:

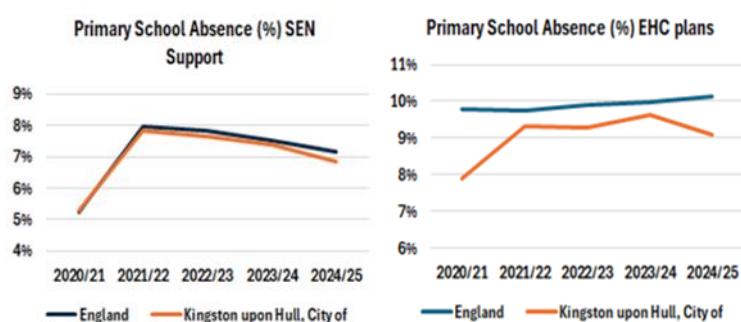
- 0–19 School Nursing Service
- Counselling services
- Turn2Us ‘Youth Work’ in schools
- Community and voluntary sector support

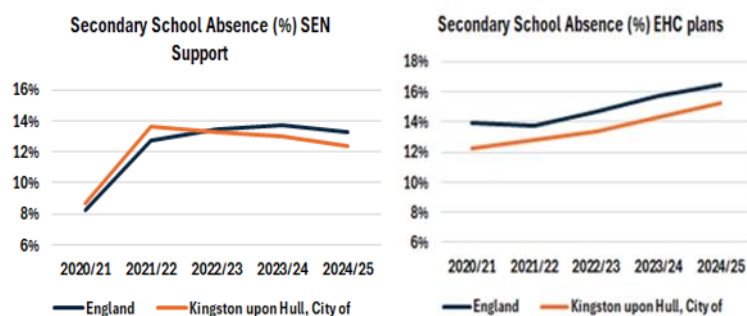
Impact

- Children and young people access emotional wellbeing support earlier
- Practitioners have increased confidence in meeting emotional and mental health needs
- More children receive support before difficulties escalate
- Schools report improved wellbeing, engagement and participation
- Children and young people feel more understood, supported and connected within their educational settings

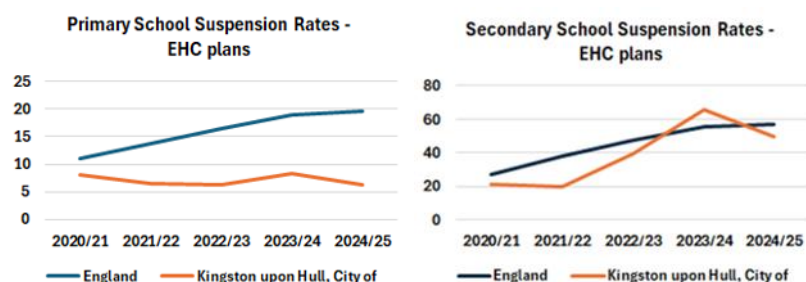
A proactive focus on inclusion means more children are accessing learning more of the time

Levels of absence for pupils with an EHC plan and for those in receipt of SEN Support, across all types of providers in the city, are below, often consistently below, corresponding England averages.

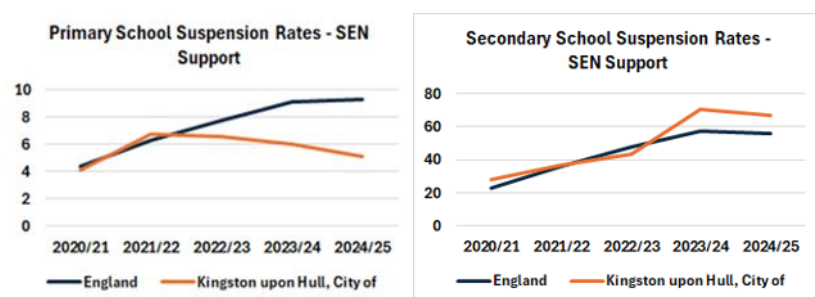




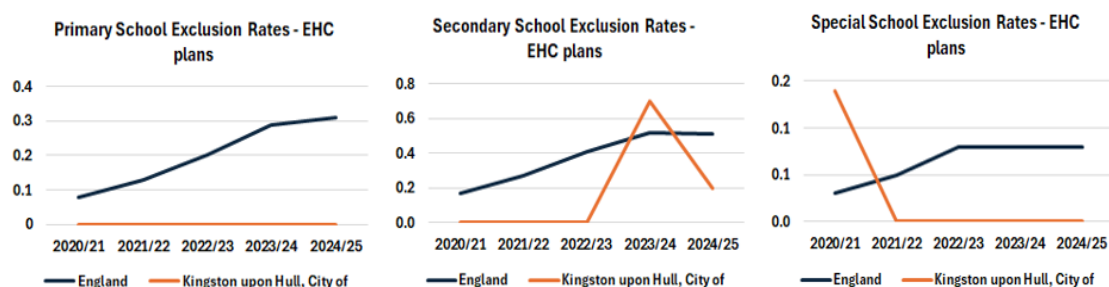
Similarly, suspension rates for pupils with an EHC plan are consistently below England averages, with the exception of a secondary 'spike' in 2024/5.



For pupils receiving SEND Support, the suspension rate is well below the England average for primary but above for secondary, albeit now reducing. Leaders have focused strategically with the schools that are driving the overall increased post-pandemic rate, including through deployment of the secondary SEMH outreach service and further investment in this service through Experts at Hand commissioning.



Except for a spike in exclusions from secondary schools during the 2023/2024 academic year, local exclusion rates for pupils with an EHC plan have been consistently below corresponding England averages.



Impact

- Improved attendance for children and young people with SEND.
- Increased participation in education and school life.
- Improved educational stability through timely support and intervention.
- Investment in Experts at Hand for secondary SEMH

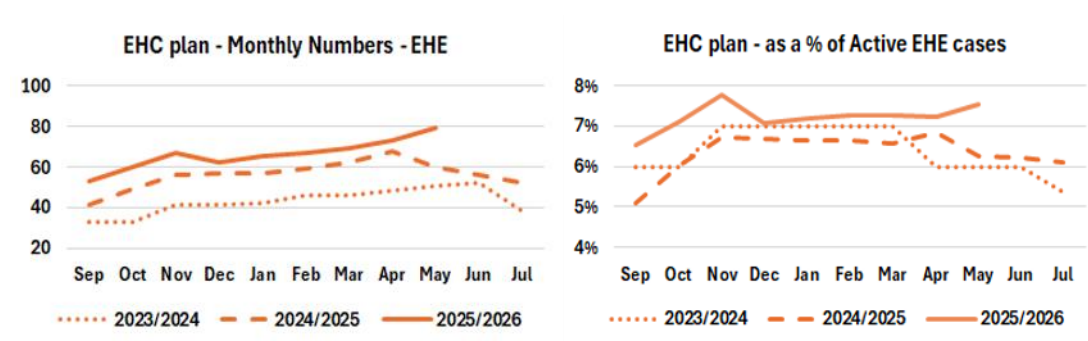
Reducing Disengagement from Education

The partnership continues to monitor closely those children and young people most vulnerable to disengagement from education. Earlier identification of need, improved access to support and strengthened partnership working are helping to reduce the risk of children missing learning opportunities due to unmet need.

Across primary, secondary and special schools in the city, reduced provision/part-time timetable rates are lower than regional and national averages.

Leaders also use attendance, Elective Home Education (EHE) and Children Missing Education (CME) data to evaluate the impact of SEND improvement activity and identify areas requiring further intervention.

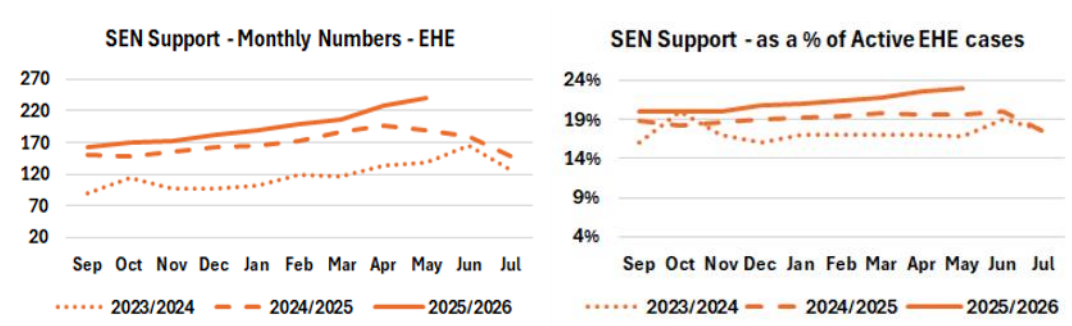
Active EHE cases involving pupils with an EHC plan have increased steadily year on year, the current monthly average number of cases is 66, compared with 56 in the previous year. EHC plan cases represented around 6.5% of all cases across the 2024/2025 academic year – in the current year, the rate is 7%. SEN Support cases represented around 19% of active cases a year ago, currently the average is in the region of 21%.



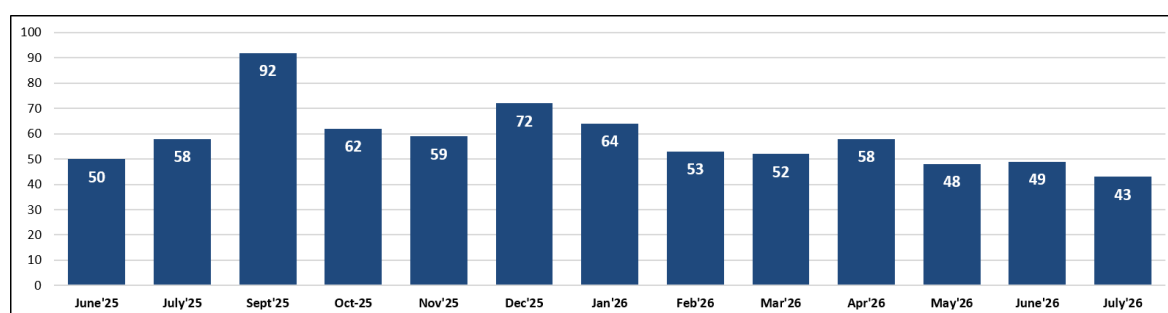
Active EHE cases involving pupils in receipt of SEN Support have increased steadily year on year, the current monthly average number of cases is 194, compared to 168 a year ago.

During the current academic year 25 EHE cases involving pupils with an EHC plan have been closed down: 16 returned to school, including 6 to their former school; 5

completed their statutory education; 3 were subject to school attendance orders and 1 became education otherwise.



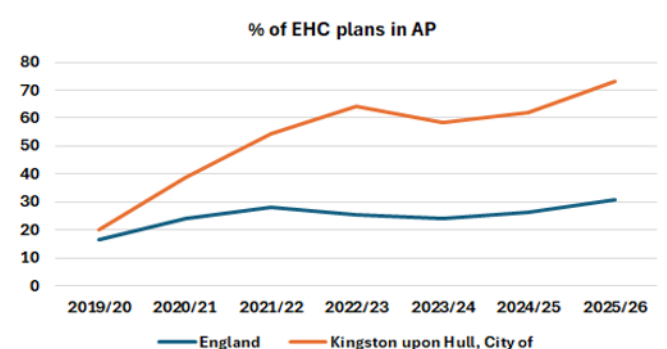
The following visual presents the number of CME cases locally for the past 13 months.



Children and young people receiving Alternative Provision

Since the 2019/2020 academic year the percentage of pupils on roll at Alternative Provision with an Education Health and Care plan in the city has increased to be significantly above the corresponding England average. At the time of the January School Census in the 2025/2026 academic year, 73% of the city's Alternative Provision population had an Education, Health and Care plan – compared to 31% nationally.

Locally this equates to 366 pupils out of a total roll of 502.



All of the city's alternative provision is Good or Better with dedicated 'Quality of Education' officers ensuring that high quality intervention plans support progress. The officers are co-located within commissioned Alternative Provision to ensure that

support plans and Day 6 provision are shaped by young people's aspirations and support needs.

Local rates of absence for pupils attending Hull AP, including both persistent and severe, are consistently below England averages. Attainment 8 scores and the percentage of pupils achieving any GCSE are consistently above England averages. This data, alongside the LA's robust QA of commissioned AP, provides assurance that young people with SEN are supported to achieve positive outcomes from their starting points.

In line with the national SEND Reform agenda, leaders are placing stronger emphasis on reintegration, identifying trusted adults and ensuring support pathways remain ambitious and outcome focused.

Within the first three months of introducing a strengthened model:

- Four young people (non EHCP) were successfully reintegrated into mainstream education.
- All placements have remained sustained.

Impact

- More young people successfully return to mainstream education.
- Improved educational stability and engagement.
- Increased focus on long-term outcomes and aspirations.

For those young people that require long term AP placement, leaders have developed a comprehensive 'risk of NEET' offer, outlined in section 7, below. The impact of this is carefully monitored.

Leaders can demonstrate that children and young people increasingly receive the right help and support at the right time. Strong multi-agency working, robust escalation processes, effective early intervention pathways and a needs-led approach ensure that support is responsive, coordinated and focused on preventing escalation. Investment in speech and language support, emotional wellbeing services and neurodiversity pathways has strengthened the Local Area's ability to respond quickly to emerging need, while targeted oversight arrangements ensure that vulnerable children and young people receive timely and appropriate support.

7. Children & young people are well prepared for their next steps, and achieve strong outcomes

Strong transition arrangements support successful progression through education

Hull has established a robust and well-embedded transition framework that supports children and young people with SEND at key points in their educational journey. A city-wide transition protocol, adopted by all schools, ensures that information is shared effectively across phases and that children with SEND receive enhanced transition support tailored to their needs.

A dedicated transition subgroup continues to drive improvement, with a current focus on strengthening arrangements for children who move schools in-year. Local analysis has identified this cohort as being at greater risk of poor attendance and adverse outcomes, and leaders have responded through the development of more consistent transition processes and shared expectations across schools. Work has also been undertaken to improve transition from year 11 to year 12, with new data sharing agreements in place to identify vulnerable groups.

Impact

- Transition support is consistently available across all schools.
- Children and young people experience smoother movement between educational phases.
- Risks associated with in-year transfers are identified and addressed earlier.
- Schools are better equipped to support continuity of learning and wellbeing.
- Reduced NEET and Not Known.

Early Years transition arrangements ensure children are ready for school

Leaders recognise that successful transitions in the early years are critical to long-term educational success. The Early Years Inclusion Team and Portage Service work closely with families and schools to ensure support arrangements are established before children enter formal education. In 2026 38 children successfully transitioned into a setting supported by the Portage Service.

Supporting successful transition into school remains a key priority. In 2026, 703 children with SEND transitioned from nursery into school. Revised transition arrangements introduced during the previous 12 months enabled 114 children, who may previously have pursued an EHCP assessment, to be supported through enhanced transition planning led by Area SENCOs and Inclusion Support Officers. The impact of these revised arrangements will be evaluated during the 2026-27 academic year.

The annual transition event for children moving on from FS1 to FS2 was held in May – 48 Schools and 28 settings attended to exchange and share information.

"It is great to get information for children prior to transition"

"Always really useful are always great at handing over important information"

"Absolutely great. Super to have honest conversations with pre-school settings"

"Nice to hand over in person and give all the information about the children"

"Excellent information and transition document from nurseries and SEND information"

"Learned all about the needs of incoming children"

"Helpful that schools are in one place. Nice to network and speak to teaching SENCOs"

Children identified as requiring an EHCP begin school with support already in place, supported by a robust graduated approach and enhanced transition planning.

Impact

- Children enter school with support arrangements in place.
- Families report increased confidence in school readiness and provision.
- Improved continuity of support reduces the risk of disruption at transition points.
- More children successfully access mainstream education and continue to make progress.

Hull Organisational Support for Transition (HOST)

This collaborative approach has strengthened partnerships between families, schools and professionals, laying the foundations for more personalised support and a smoother, better-prepared transition for year 6 pupils with SEND into secondary mainstream education.

- **Proactive and coordinated transition planning**
Sharing information, identifying strengths and anticipating possible barriers before transition supported early planning of provision, recommendations and reasonable adjustments, helping receiving schools understand pupils' needs before they start. Parents described leaving the process with a clear, evidence-based and tailored plan. This increased confidence that needs would be met and reduced the likelihood of avoidable difficulties during transition
- **Children receive more individualised transition experiences.**
The additional transition days were described as more supportive than the general transition offer and were seen as highly successful.

- **Collaborative working ensures relationships between families and receiving schools are strengthened**

The face-to-face meeting in secondary school supported parents to work collaboratively with the primary, secondary school and other professionals at the same time, in one meeting. HOST created a direct link between the parent and secondary school, enabling clearer accountability around the agreed plan.

Capacity building in schools:

Working systemically – upskilling the primary schools with transition support tools which can be used again.

Signposting and resource sharing – builds opportunities to better support young people's needs.

Impact

51 out of 72 primary and all 12 secondary schools participated in the HOST Project in year 1. The number of children supported in 2024-2025 was 74, rising to 84 cases in 2025-2026. In the first cohort to be supported, only 8 out of 74 Year 6 pupils subsequently requested a statutory assessment. In the second cohort to be supported, only 5 out of 84 Year 6 pupils requested a statutory assessment.

Feedback from 'HOST' parents:



Outcomes for young people with EHCPs who are NEET compare favourably to national figures

The Local Authority retains a dedicated Connexions service which includes a designated SEND Adviser. Leaders have prioritised improving employment, education and training outcomes for young people with SEND.

As of December 2025:

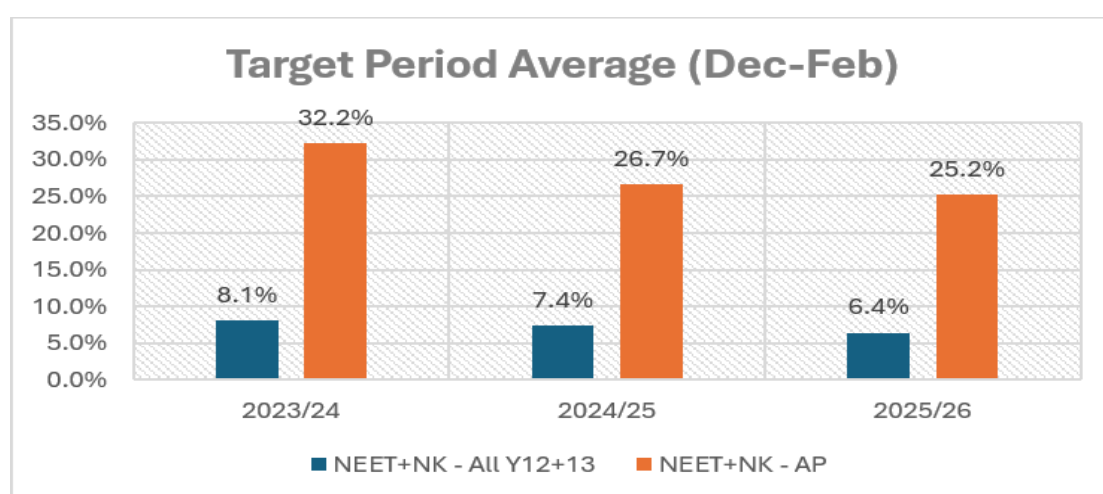
- 33.8% of Hull's 16–24 EHCP cohort were NEET or Not Known
- England: 42.6%

- Yorkshire and Humber: 34.7%
- Statistical neighbours: 35%

This represents a small increase from 29.3% in the previous December, mainly due to a significant increase in the EHCP cohort from 868 to 1035 young people.

Impact

- The volume of young people with an EHCP that are participating in education, employment or training has remained relatively stable.
- Outcomes compare favourably against all comparison groups.
- Increasing demand is being managed alongside stabilised outcomes.



Post 16 destinations of the Alternative Provision cohort

In 2025, 95.7% of all young people leaving school in Hull progressed into education, employment or training. This compares with 74.6% of young people who attended an Alternative Provision (AP) setting, as shown in the table below.

Of the 193 young people in the AP cohort, 65.3% were male. The majority (76.2%) had identified special educational needs, including 66 young people with an EHCP and 81 receiving SEND Support. The most common post-16 destination for young people from AP settings was a further education college (60.1%). Most of these learners were studying vocational qualifications below Level 3.

The Connexions service provides an enhanced offer to AP learners, reflecting their higher risk of becoming NEET. 5.2% of the cohort participated in re-engagement programmes compared with the wider cohort (0.8%)

Year 11 Destinations (as at the 1st November 2025)

HULL ACTIVITIES FOR ALTERNATIVE PROVISION PUPILS 2025															
		MEETING THE DUTY TO PARTICIPATE						NOT PARTICIPATING				WORKING TOWARDS	TEMP BREAK FROM LEARNING		
	No.	6th Form School	6th Form College	Further Education	Other Training	Apprenticeship	Employment with accredited training	Employment without Training	NEET Available to the Labour Market	Part Time Education	Part Time Employment	Not Known	Re-Engagement Activities	NEET Not Available to the Labour Market*	TOTAL IN LEARNING
Males	126	3	5	75	3	4	3	7	19	0	0	0	6	1	93
%		2.4%	4.0%	59.5%	2.4%	3.2%	2.4%	5.6%	15.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	0.8%	73.8%
Females	67	3	2	41	2	2	1	0	8	0	0	0	4	4	51
%		4.5%	3.0%	61.2%	3.0%	3.0%	1.5%	0.0%	11.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.0%	6.0%	76.1%
Total	193	6	7	116	5	6	4	7	27	0	0	0	10	5	144
%		3.1%	3.6%	60.1%	2.6%	3.1%	2.1%	3.6%	14.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.2%	2.6%	74.6%

NEET / Not Known for those who attended alternative provision in year 11

The charts and graph below compare the proportion of young people who attended Alternative Provision (AP) in Year 11 and were recorded as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) or Not Known with the target period average for all young people.

In 2023/24, 32.2% of young people from AP settings were recorded as NEET or Not Known, compared with 8.1% of all young people. In 2024/25, this reduced to 26.7%, compared with 7.4% of all young people. During the current target period, 25.2% of young people from AP settings were recorded as NEET or Not Known, compared with 6.4% of all young people.

The data demonstrates positive progress in reducing the proportion of AP young people who are NEET or Not Known. However, despite this improvement, a significant gap remains between the AP cohort and the wider population of young people. Further work is therefore required to improve outcomes for this vulnerable group, and reducing this gap remains a key priority.

Connexions Support for Young People from Alternative Provision

Connexions support young people who have attended AP through a range of targeted interventions designed to promote successful participation in education, employment and training. These include:

- A Risk of NEET service delivered within all AP settings. Connexions Advisers work with young people to provide careers information, advice and guidance, helping them overcome barriers to progression and make a successful transition into post-16 education, employment or training. Support continues after they leave school until they are settled in a sustained destination.
- Informal and flexible drop-in sessions at Kenworthy House, providing access to advice and support.
- Information, advice and guidance to explore a wide range of career and progression opportunities.
- Signposting and liaison with a range of partner organisations and support services.
- Support with applications and attendance at college and training provider interviews.

- Visits to a range of post-16 providers to help young people explore available options and make informed choices about their future pathways.
- Access to Passport to Progression, Connexions' in-house re-engagement programme for young people requiring more intensive and regular support after leaving compulsory education.
- Access to The Skills Network, an online flexible learning platform offering a range of accredited courses.
- Access to Log On Move On (www.logonmoveon.co.uk), the local authority's online careers, course search and application portal.

Connexions seek to provide personalised support for young people from AP settings, tailoring information, advice and guidance to meet individual needs and reduce the risk of young people becoming NEET.

Children and young people are increasingly prepared for adulthood

Now in its fifth year, Hull's annual Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Event continues to grow and now reflects all four PfA outcomes:

- Education and employment.
- Independent living.
- Good health.
- Community inclusion.

In 2026, over 40 organisations participated including colleges, training providers, Hull University, Adult Social Care, Supported Internships, Statutory SEND team, health services and voluntary sector organisations.

All special schools attended alongside increasing numbers of mainstream schools. The event was also visited by SEND young people in post 16 provision to help them to consider their next steps. Those not currently in education, employment or training attended to discover what is available to help them re-engage with provision.

The Local Offer has been strengthened through a dedicated "Becoming an Adult" section '[Becoming an Adult](#)' providing information on:

- Employment.
- Volunteering.
- Housing.
- Community activities.

Impact

- More young people and families understand pathways into adulthood.

- Improved access to information and advice.
- Greater awareness of employment, education and independent living opportunities.
- 92% of attendees to the event said they now feel supported about their future.

Supported Internships and employment pathways are delivering strong outcomes

Hull continues to perform strongly in relation to the volume of young people aged 16-25 accessing supported internships.

In December 2025:

- 2.1% of Hull's 16–24 cohort were participating in Supported Internships.
- England average: 0.9%.
- Yorkshire and Humber: 1.3%.
- Statistical neighbours: 0.5%.

Hull has now had more young people accessing Support Internships than all our comparison groups for well over the past 5 years.

Opportunities are supported through:

- Project Search.
- Hull College pre-internship programme.
- Jobcentre Plus partnerships.
- Connect to work
- Hull Youth Hub

Impact

Young people report increasing confidence and independence:

“They don't hold your hand here. They know exactly when the help is needed and when you can work by yourself.”

More young people are accessing meaningful employment pathways and developing the skills required for sustained employment.

Post-16 Inclusion Bases – Next Phase of Sufficiency Planning

Building on the significant success of the Inclusion Bases established across the primary and secondary phases, the Local Area is now progressing plans to strengthen inclusive post-16 pathways as part of the next phase of SEND sufficiency planning. This development is closely aligned to the national SEND and Alternative Provision

Improvement Plan, supporting the ambition for more children and young people with SEND to access high-quality mainstream provision within their local communities.

Recognising the growing demand for Post-16 SEND provision and the need to improve preparation for adulthood outcomes, the Local Authority is exploring the development of Post-16 Inclusion Bases that will extend the city's inclusive education offer beyond statutory school age. These developments will seek to provide increased opportunities for young people with SEND to remain within mainstream environments, benefiting from specialist support whilst accessing broader educational, vocational and employment pathways.

A collaborative city-wide approach is being adopted, working closely with the Learning Partnership, education leaders and post-16 providers to share the vision for inclusive growth and develop a collective understanding of future need. Expressions of Interest have been invited from providers interested in participating in potential capital development schemes to support the creation of new Inclusion Bases. This process reflects the strong partnership approach that has underpinned the successful delivery of Inclusion Bases across primary and secondary phases.

During the Autumn Term, submitted proposals will be reviewed against identified sufficiency needs, strategic priorities and opportunities for sustainable delivery. Feasibility studies will then be undertaken on viable schemes to determine their suitability, affordability and potential impact on increasing inclusive mainstream capacity across the post-16 sector.

This work represents a key strategic priority within the SEND Transformation Programme and demonstrates the Local Area's continued commitment to developing a graduated continuum of provision. Through targeted investment and strong partnership working, the city aims to further strengthen inclusive educational opportunities, improve local choice and ensure that more young people with SEND can access appropriate support within their mainstream community, leading to improved preparation for adulthood outcomes and reduced reliance on specialist placements.

Travel Training and Transport Support Promote Independence and Successful Transition

Hull's Independent Travel Training (ITT) programme supports children and young people with SEND to develop the skills, confidence and resilience required to travel safely and independently within their local community, including journeys to school, college and wider community destinations.

The programme forms an important element of Hull's Preparation for Adulthood offer, enabling young people to increase their independence, access education and employment opportunities, build social connections and participate more fully in community life. These transferable life skills support long-term independence and reduce reliance on adult support and specialist transport arrangements.

Before a learner begins the programme, a comprehensive individual risk assessment and route assessment are completed to determine suitability and identify any support

requirements. Training is delivered through a personalised, staged approach in which support is gradually reduced as skills, confidence and safety awareness develop. Progression is based on demonstrated competence rather than timescales, ensuring that young people only move forward when it is safe and appropriate to do so. Structured workbooks, practical learning activities and regular observations by trainers and team leaders provide robust quality assurance and ensure that progress towards independence is carefully monitored.

The programme continues to expand its reach across the city through strong partnership working with schools and colleges. Education providers are encouraged to identify pupils with the potential to travel independently and work alongside the travel training team to support participation. A notable example is Ganton Secondary School, where a whole-school review of travel independence skills led to two young people successfully completing travel training and a further 21 pupils no longer requiring a passenger assistant.

This demonstrates how targeted interventions can increase independence whilst ensuring support is proportionate to need.

The Local Offer has been enhanced to provide clearer information about travel training and enable digital referrals from families, young people and professionals. Demand for the programme continues to grow, with a waiting list of over 30 referrals, demonstrating increasing awareness of the benefits of independent travel as an important Preparation for Adulthood outcome.

The travel training team has also worked collaboratively with local transport providers to create a supportive travel environment for young people developing their independence. Partnership arrangements with local bus operators and staff at the Hull Interchange provide access to additional support when required, helping young people to build confidence in using public transport safely. During training, access to free public transport further removes barriers to participation and supports successful programme completion.

These arrangements help ensure that young people can apply their learning in real-world settings and develop the confidence to travel independently beyond education, supporting successful adulthood outcomes.

‘Big Buzz’ and preparing for adulthood

Big Buzz is a weekly social session for young people aged 16 – 24 yrs with identified disabilities and support needs, held at Kingston Youth Centre. With support from youth workers, through social, fun activities and informal learning young people can explore issues of independence and build confidence in personal and social skills. The session is an opportunity to meet new friends, develop peer support networks and build the skills needed as they transition into adulthood.

Transition into Adult Social Care is Strengthening

Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) arrangements continue to strengthen through improved partnership working between Children's and Adult Services, increased social work capacity and more robust transition planning. Adult Social Care has established a single point of access for all PfA referrals, creating a more consistent approach to

assessment, allocation and planning. Co-location of the High Needs Team and Children's Disability Service within the SEND Integrated Hub has further improved communication, information sharing and continuity of support for young people and families.

The multi-agency Preparation for Adulthood Steering Group provides strong strategic oversight across the four PfA pillars: health, independence, community inclusion and employment. Increasingly, preparation for adulthood is embedded across education, health and care services, ensuring planning focuses on long-term outcomes and independence rather than point-of-transfer arrangements.

Joint working between Children's and Adult Services has strengthened significantly, including improved collaboration around Mental Capacity Act processes and decision-making. This is enabling young people and families to better understand future pathways and participate more meaningfully in planning for adulthood.

Demand for Adult Social Care transition support continues to increase, with the High Needs Team currently supporting 222 young people. Whilst leaders' ambition is for all young people likely to require Adult Social Care support to begin assessment and planning activity from age 16, increasing demand and capacity pressures mean this is not yet achieved consistently. Leaders have undertaken detailed analysis and identified this as a priority area for improvement.

Strong leadership oversight is supporting effective risk management and continuity of support. A fortnightly Transition Tracking Panel brings together Children's and Adult Services to oversee young people approaching adulthood, monitor progress against key milestones, escalate concerns and coordinate planning. This has strengthened accountability and reduced the risk of delays, gaps in support or unplanned transitions.

Commissioning arrangements are also strengthening transition pathways. Shared commissioning of Supported Living and Advocacy Services is improving continuity of provision across children's and adult services. In addition, the development of dual Ofsted and CQC-registered provision aims to reduce unnecessary placement moves at age 18, enabling young people to remain in stable environments, maintain important relationships and experience smoother transitions into adulthood.

Co-production and Engagement

Young people, families and parent carers are increasingly influencing the development of Preparation for Adulthood arrangements through a programme of engagement and co-production activity.

PfA social workers regularly engage with families through Parent Carer Forum events and school-based activities, providing advice on transition pathways, future support options and preparation for adulthood. Direct engagement at Northcott School and the annual Hull Preparation for Adulthood Event has improved access to information about education, employment, independent living and community opportunities. Planned school-based drop-in sessions will further strengthen early engagement and accessibility.

The High Needs Team has also strengthened workforce understanding through targeted transition training, ensuring practitioners are better equipped to support early planning and positive adulthood outcomes.

Impact

- Stronger partnership working has improved coordination between children's and adult services, supporting more seamless transitions into adulthood.
- Co-location of services has enhanced communication, information sharing and joint decision-making.
- Earlier identification of future support needs is enabling more proactive planning for many young people and families.
- The Transition Tracking Panel has strengthened oversight, accountability and risk management, reducing the likelihood of unmanaged transitions.
- Preparation for Adulthood is increasingly embedded across the partnership, with greater focus on independence, employment, community participation and long-term outcomes.
- Young people and families have improved access to information, advice and support, helping them make informed decisions about adulthood.

Parent Carer Feedback Demonstrates Positive Impact

Feedback from families consistently highlights the positive difference practitioners make to the lives of children and young people with SEND. Parents describe staff as compassionate, responsive and committed to securing the best possible outcomes for their children.

Families report feeling listened to, informed and well supported throughout complex processes, valuing the strong relationships, effective communication and practical support provided. Feedback frequently highlights the positive impact of practitioner advocacy in helping families navigate services and secure appropriate support.

Recurring themes include:

- Families feel listened to and respected
- Practitioners build strong, trusted relationships
- Staff are professional, committed and person-centred
- Communication is effective and responsive
- Advocacy contributes to positive outcomes
- Families feel more confident navigating services and accessing support

Parents described practitioners as:

"Absolutely amazing and dedicated."

"Going above and beyond."

"Making a real difference."

This feedback demonstrates a culture of compassion, high expectations and effective partnership with families, where practitioners provide both practical support and strong advocacy to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Evidence of Improved Timeliness

As of July 2026, 60% of Care Act assessments were completed before a young person reached the age of 18:

- 5% completed at age 16 or younger.
- 55% completed at age 17.

A further 40% were completed at age 18 or over.

This demonstrates that most young people requiring Adult Social Care assessment are identified before adulthood, enabling earlier planning, reducing uncertainty for families and supporting smoother transitions between children's and adult services.

Leaders' Evaluation of Remaining Challenges

Leaders recognise that, although transition arrangements have improved significantly, further work is required to increase the number of young people who begin assessment and planning activity from age 16. While 60% of Care Act assessments are now completed before adulthood, leaders acknowledge that this falls short of their ambition for all eligible young people.

Rising demand for transition support continues to place pressure on capacity and impacts the ability to undertake assessments early in every case. However, risks are mitigated through robust oversight, strengthened multi-agency working and effective transition tracking arrangements.

Improvement activity is focused on workforce capacity, service development, commissioning and the earlier identification of young people likely to require Adult Social Care support. Progress is monitored through:

- The proportion of young people assessed from age 16 onwards.
- Timeliness of assessments and transition planning.
- Young person and family feedback.
- PfA outcomes relating to education, employment, independence, health, wellbeing and community participation.

8. Children and young people with SEND are valued, visible and included in their communities

Children and young people who experience social isolation are supported to develop friendships, confidence and belonging

Hull is committed to ensuring that children and young people with SEND have opportunities to develop friendships, pursue interests and participate fully in community life.

Hull City Council's Youth Development Service delivers targeted provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities aged 11–24 through Buzzaballoo and Big Buzz. These programmes provide safe and supportive environments where young people can develop friendships, explore interests and access trusted adults who understand their experiences.

The Matthews Hub further strengthens this offer for young people aged 13–25, providing a welcoming environment where neurodivergent young people feel accepted, understood and supported as they prepare for adulthood.

Our Hull Youth Development Service provide a wide-ranging locality based and City-Wide youth offer, including social sessions, activities, drama, arts, crafts and much more. Some of this offer is specific for young people with SEN – as above – but the wider offer is inclusive for young people with SEN and Neurodiversity and creates lots of opportunity for young people develop friendships, build confidence and belonging. For example, our Smile programme reaches lots of young people with SEN and our Elective Home Education social sessions also includes young people with SEN who are EHE.

Impact

- Young people report increased confidence and self-esteem
- Children and young people develop meaningful friendships and social networks
- Opportunities for social isolation are reduced
- Young people experience increased belonging within their local communities

Children and young people with SEND have access to an extensive range of inclusive holiday activities

Healthy Holidays Hull, the local brand for the delivery of the DfE funded Holiday Activity & Food programme delivers a comprehensive programme of SEND-specific provision during school holidays, accounting for approximately 10% of all holiday activity provision.

The City Council has issued four strategic contracts for the delivery of the Healthy Holidays programme through to March 2029. One of these contracts is specifically for SEND provision. Sportsability, a specialist training and activity provider with extensive experience in the provision of SEND specific and inclusive activities are contracted to deliver a wide-ranging programme of enrichment activities, including swimming, water-based activities, go-karting, climbing, cook-and-eat sessions, arts and outdoor learning experiences, supported by a healthy food offer.

The Healthy Holidays programme works closely with voluntary and community sector partners also delivering SEND specific activities including:

- Special Stars Foundation
- KIDS Yorkshire
- Hull Truck Theatre
- Listening Ear 4 You
- Movement to Music
- Oasis Hull
- Preston Road Enterprises

The annual programme also includes SEND-specific ice-skating provision and where possible the entire HAF programme is open access and offers a broad range of inclusive community activities.

Impact

- Children and young people with SEND can participate in high-quality holiday activities alongside their peers.
- Families have increased access to inclusive activities during school holidays.
- Opportunities for social interaction, independence and community participation are strengthened.

- Barriers to participation are reduced through targeted SEND provision.

Sport and leisure opportunities are increasingly inclusive and accessible

Hull continues to remove barriers to participation through a comprehensive programme of inclusive sport and leisure opportunities.

‘The holidays are a really tricky time for lots of families, but when you are autistic being out of routine and everything being super busy, loud and unpredictable it means generally we just cannot attend.’

‘The Sportsability sessions are quite honestly a lifeline for us and the only reason we get out of the house in the holidays.’

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Accessible facilities are available across the city, including:

- Changing Places facilities
- Pool hoists
- Specialist equipment
- Trained support staff

Hull Ice Arena hosts two weekly disability ice-skating sessions designed to create a calmer and more inclusive environment through reduced lighting and quieter music. Participants can access the ice either independently or whilst using wheelchairs and skating aids.

Over the previous 12 months disability ice-skating sessions welcomed approximately 1,800 visits from participants and carers.

Woodford Leisure Centre hosts four weekly disability swimming sessions. Three are integrated alongside public sessions to encourage participation and community engagement, while one session provides a dedicated SEND environment.

These sessions received approximately 11,000 visits over the previous year.

East Park Water Play provides dedicated SEND sessions for children under five years old and welcomed approximately 150 bookings during summer 2024/25. East Park is also home to the region's largest adapted cycling scheme, offering more than 90 adapted bicycles for children and adults with physical, sensory and learning disabilities.

Across the previous 12 months, 6,173 visits were made by carers supporting children and adults with disabilities at leisure facilities across the city.

Impact

- Children and young people with SEND are increasingly able to participate in mainstream leisure opportunities.
- Participation in physical activity and recreation is increasing.
- Families report improved access to inclusive community activities.
- Reasonable adjustments ensure children and young people can access the same opportunities as their peers.

Cultural, creative and educational experiences are accessible to all

Hull Culture and Leisure (HCAL) work closely with schools and communities to ensure children and young people with SEND can access cultural, educational and creative opportunities. HCAL's Swim Education Programme works with five SEND schools and a range of specialist SEND workshops delivered through the Animal Education Centre and Active Through Football programme support personal development, confidence and community participation.

The annual Big Malarkey Festival places accessibility at the centre of its design. Children and young people with SEND can access:

- Accessible arts workshops.
- Sensory story experiences.
- Accessible music provision.
- Quiet spaces.
- Specialist theatre experiences.
- BSL interpretation.
- Social stories.

- Accessible booking arrangements.

Children and young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties are actively represented in festival planning through a strong SEND voice on the advisory board.

Impact

- More children and young people with SEND participate in cultural and creative opportunities.
- Children develop confidence, communication and social skills.
- Families report feeling welcome and included.
- Accessibility is increasingly embedded within mainstream cultural experiences.

Arts, drama and performance opportunities enable children and young people to find their voice

Hull's arts offer is increasingly inclusive by design.

Theatres across the city provide adapted performances incorporating:

- Captioning
- BSL interpretation
- Reduced sensory effects
- Relaxed performances
- Touch tours

The Just Drama Youth Theatre provides opportunities for young people with social, emotional and mental health needs to develop confidence, communication and self-expression through drama. The group recently performed at Creative Voice Youth Arts, receiving a standing ovation from an audience of more than 60 family members.

Impact

- Young people develop confidence and self-expression.
- Creative opportunities strengthen self-esteem and resilience.
- Children and young people become more visible within their communities.

- Families report positive impacts on personal development and wellbeing.

Museums and galleries are making community spaces more accessible and welcoming

Hull Museums and Ferens Art Gallery provide a range of adapted and sensory-friendly opportunities for disabled and neurodivergent children and young people. Monthly quiet opening sessions are available at:

- Streetlife Museum
- Hull and East Riding Museum
- Ferens Art Gallery

Regular SEND-focused workshops provide creative opportunities within quieter, supportive environments. The monthly Flourish with Ferens programme supports disabled and neurodivergent children and young people to explore creativity and develop artistic skills.

Impact

- Community spaces are becoming increasingly accessible.
- Children and young people with SEND participate in activities they may otherwise find inaccessible.
- Families report greater confidence in accessing cultural venues.
- Barriers to participation are reduced.

Community partnerships are improving participation, confidence and aspiration

The Local Area works closely with community organisations to expand opportunities for children and young people with SEND.

A partnership between LAFSS and Hull City Football Club has created a specialist coaching programme for children with SEND who experience low confidence, social difficulties or significant adversity.

The programme has grown from six to twelve participants and provides weekly coaching, fitness activities and opportunities to engage with Hull City players. Participants have attended fixtures, acted as ball boys and represented LAFSS at community events.

Feedback demonstrates improvements in:

- Confidence.
- Friendships
- Resilience
- Community participation

Community organisations also continue to support the SEND Integrated Hub and LAFSS through donations of sensory resources, technology and fundraising activities, strengthening opportunities available to children and young people with SEND.

Impact

- Children and young people develop confidence and social connections.
- Engagement in community activities is increasing.
- Partnerships broaden opportunities available to children with SEND.
- Children and young people are increasingly represented, celebrated and visible within community life.

Children with SEND and Additional Vulnerabilities Receive Coordinated Support

Hull's Children with Disabilities Service provides specialist support to children and young people with complex needs and their families, whilst also offering consultation and co-working support to locality teams. The service ensures that children with SEND who may also have safeguarding, health or social care vulnerabilities receive coordinated and responsive support that reflects their holistic needs.

Social worker caseloads reflect a mixed profile, with the majority of work focused on Section 17 assessment and support related to disability, alongside support for children subject to Child Protection Plans and children in care. Children are supported by three dedicated teams of experienced managers and social workers, ensuring that disability needs and safeguarding considerations are addressed in a coordinated way.

The service has continued to strengthen capacity and expertise. Three Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants support families requiring adaptations, specialist equipment and moving and handling

assessments, whilst a successful "grow your own" approach is helping develop future specialist practitioners.

In 2025, investment in four additional Disability Support Workers increased capacity to undertake short break assessments and provide post-assessment support to children and families.

Following assessment, children are considered through a multi-agency Short Breaks Panel involving representatives from health, SEND, Early Help, youth services and Welfare Rights. This ensures a holistic understanding of the child and family and supports timely access to appropriate provision.

Impact

- Children with complex needs receive coordinated support that considers both disability and safeguarding needs
- Families benefit from access to specialist occupational therapy, equipment and home adaptations
- Increased workforce capacity has improved access to assessments and support
- Multi-agency decision-making ensures services respond to the whole family context
- Children and families receive timely support that is tailored to their individual needs and circumstances

Children and Young People Access Meaningful Community Opportunities and Short Breaks

Hull provides a broad range of opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to participate in community life, develop independence and enjoy meaningful social experiences.

Families can access a range of support services including planned short breaks, direct payments, day care provision and activity-based support through the Leisure and Family Support Service (LAFSS). Short break provision is delivered during the day, evenings, weekends and school holidays, providing both respite for families and opportunities for children and young people to participate in enriching activities. The service receives consistently positive feedback from families.

In 2025, LAFSS delivered 540 sessions for children and young people through its summer programme. This internally delivered model has increased flexibility and responsiveness to family needs. The service has also expanded its offer through supported family breaks, currently delivered one weekend each month for up to

eight families, alongside organised group activities including seaside visits and trips to Yorkshire Wildlife Park.

These opportunities support children and young people to build confidence, develop friendships, access new experiences and participate more fully in their communities. For many families, they provide opportunities that might otherwise be difficult to access independently.

Impact

- 540 LAFSS sessions were provided to children and young people during 2025.
- Children and young people have increased access to social, recreational and community activities.
- Families report positive experiences of short break provision and respite support.
- Opportunities help reduce social isolation and strengthen peer relationships.
- Whole-family wellbeing is improved through meaningful shared experiences and support networks.
- Children and young people are increasingly visible and active within their local communities.

Families Benefit from Integrated and Accessible Services

The Local Area has continued to expand and improve access to support through the development of integrated and community-based services for children, young people and families.

The SEND Integrated Hub is now firmly established within the heart of Hull City Centre, bringing together Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, SEND services and Health colleagues within a single location. This co-located model has strengthened partnership working, improved communication between services and made it easier for families to access coordinated support.

The Local Authority has committed to a second phase of development, with resources already secured. This will further enhance the offer through the creation of:

- An indoor sensory garden.
- A gaming suite.

- Additional sensory facilities.

This investment demonstrates the Local Area's ongoing commitment to creating accessible, welcoming and inclusive spaces for children and young people with SEND. In addition, every Family Hub across Hull now provides a sensory room that can be booked free of charge. These facilities provide safe spaces for sensory regulation, therapeutic activity and crisis de-escalation, whilst also enabling families to spend positive time together.

Families also benefit from targeted SEND-focused Early Help support. This includes:

- Parenting support
- Assistance with benefits and grants
- Early Help assessments and plans
- Team Around the Family meetings
- Coordination of support across agencies

During 2024/25:

- 70 parents attended the Sensory Eating Challenges programme.
- 90 parents attended the Autism and Sensory Processing Difference programme.
- 101 families received targeted SEND Early Help support.

Impact

- Families experience improved access to coordinated advice, support and services.
- Co-location of services strengthens multi-agency working and reduces barriers to support.
- Sensory facilities provide accessible and therapeutic spaces for children and families.
- Targeted Early Help ensures families receive support before needs escalate.
- Parents report increased confidence in supporting their children.

- Children and young people benefit from services that are increasingly integrated, accessible and responsive to need.

Leaders can demonstrate that children and young people with SEND are increasingly valued, visible and included within their communities. A broad range of inclusive leisure, cultural, educational and social opportunities are available across the city, underpinned by strong partnerships between the local authority, health services, schools, voluntary organisations and community providers. Participation is increasing across sport, arts, culture and youth activities, while reasonable adjustments and accessible environments ensure that children and young people with SEND can access the same opportunities as their peers. As a result, children and young people are developing confidence, friendships, independence and a stronger sense of belonging within their communities.



9. Leadership of SEND

a) Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

Leaders across the Local Area Partnership share a strong and ambitious vision for children and young people with SEND. This vision has been co-produced with partners, families and stakeholders and is supported by six ambitious strategic priorities that drive improvement across the SEND system.

Leaders maintain a relentless focus on delivery and outcomes, ensuring that strategic priorities translate into tangible improvements for children, young people and families. This focus has been recognised consistently through six-monthly Department for Education reviews and informal feedback on the Local Area SEND Reform Plan.

Robust governance arrangements ensure that all Senior Responsible Officers are accountable for the delivery and impact of improvement activity. Through detailed benefits realisation tracking, every action within the SEND Improvement Plan is aligned to baseline measures, success criteria and intended outcomes. Progress is monitored through SEND Delivery arrangements and scrutinised through the Strategic SEND Board. A formal change management process ensures completed actions remain visible, impact is documented, and risks, drift or delays are identified and challenged promptly.

Impact

- Strategic priorities are clearly understood across the partnership
- Improvement activity remains focused on measurable outcomes
- Leaders maintain strong oversight of delivery and impact
- External reviews consistently recognise effective governance and accountability

The Hull Parent Carer Forum is proactive in ensuring the parent-carer voice informs decision-making

The Hull Parent Carer Forum (HPCF) is represented on the Strategic SEND Board and contributes directly to SEND Delivery arrangements. PCF leaders collate survey feedback and provide in-depth case-studies so that leaders fully understand the impact on children and families on occasions when systems or processes let them down. A recent example is a report identifying barriers to attendance which the LA's attendance conference has been shaped around. The report also clearly identifies what parent-carers have found makes a positive difference.

SENDIASS reporting and regular engagement activity across services further strengthens parent-carer voice. Meeting action trackers demonstrate numerous "You Said, We Did" examples, illustrating how feedback directly shapes service delivery and improvement.

HPCF has formed a wider 'SEND Alliance, partnering with, among other groups, Parents United. This Early Years group continue to influence service development across the city. Responding to parental feedback, the service created a dedicated social media platform which increased reach by 38% and engagement by 291%.

Young people's voices are similarly influential. Hull's Youth Parliament, Young Mayor programme, Voice and Influence Groups and Youth Scrutiny arrangements ensure that children and young people actively influence local decision-making.

The Risk of NEET Offer is shaped by young people

All of those at Risk of Neet have vulnerabilities and many will have SEND. Just over 13% of those responding to the survey identified as having an illness or impairment which may indicate SEND. The feedback helps to ensure the Connexions service meets the needs of young people and helps to shape our service offer. A questionnaire is reviewed annually. The headline findings from the survey confirmed that 99% of young people were very happy with the overall service received from their respective Connexions adviser.

Needs-led support is increasingly informed by service-user voice

The Local Area is committed to ensuring that support services are shaped by the experiences, priorities and aspirations of children and young people. This is particularly evident within the development of emotional wellbeing and mental health services.

The Integrated Care Board's *Nothing About Us Without Us* Voice and Influence Group continues to play a significant role in shaping mental health services across the Humber and North Yorkshire footprint. The group brings together children and young people with lived experience to influence service design, service development and system improvement.

Most recently, the group has developed a series of recommendations aimed at improving emotional wellbeing and mental health support for children and young people. These recommendations align directly with the Thrive Hull Partnership, which seeks to simplify and streamline access to mental health support in the city.

The views of children and young people are informing decisions about how services are delivered, ensuring that support pathways better reflect lived experience and respond to the needs of those who use them.

Impact

- Children and young people actively influence how mental health services are designed and improved.
- Mental health pathways are increasingly responsive to lived experience.
- Services are shaped by what children and young people say they need.
- Young people report feeling listened to and valued within service improvement processes.
- The Local Area demonstrates a commitment to designing support with, rather than for, children and young people.

Relationships That Matter

The partnership's Relationships That Matter campaign and recognition event further demonstrates the value placed on lived experience. Teachers, support staff and school leaders who parents confirm make a positive difference to their SEN children's experience of school are celebrated in Hull's relational version of a School Award Ceremony. This has done much to promote the importance of relationships to school leaders, a point that is also emphasised in HPCF's Attendance Briefing Report. It now also underpins the LA's Attendance campaign.

A Nothing About Us lived experience lead was a keynote at the 2026 event, sharing Trusted Adults postcards and the voices of young people through a Trusted Adults film that has featured in national Voice publications. Leaders are proactive in promoting the relational approaches that matter most to children and young people, celebrating their impact through the Relationships that Matter nomination process.

Impact

- Children, young people and families influence strategic decision-making
- Service developments increasingly reflect lived experience
- Parent and young person participation is strengthening trust in services
- Co-production is embedded across the SEND system rather than isolated to individual services

b) Leaders have an accurate and shared understanding of local need

Leaders maintain a sophisticated understanding of both current and future needs across the local area.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment provides a continually updated analysis of local need, while SEND sufficiency planning is informed through detailed analysis of:

- Primary need trends
- Locality-based demand
- Age-related trends
- Forecast demand modelling

An important strength is the partnership's use of early years intelligence. Although voluntary, 98% of PVI settings and childminders delivering funded early education submit developmental data through the city's Overview Tool. This information is analysed and shared across education, health and social care and directly influences strategic planning.

A SEND Scorecard is a standing item within strategic governance arrangements and is used as a key mechanism to monitor performance, challenge practice, and drive continuous improvement across the SEND system. Scorecard data is reviewed routinely by senior leaders and partners, enabling the identification of emerging trends, areas of risk, and opportunities for improvement. Where concerns are identified, focused deep dives are commissioned to better understand underlying causes, evaluate the effectiveness of current provision, and inform targeted action. Recent examples have included Elective Home Education (EHE), attendance, exclusions, and the use of alternative provision. These reviews have directly informed service redesign, strengthened partnership working, and increased collective accountability for improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Leaders make extensive use of benchmarking data to assess system performance against national, regional, and statistical neighbour comparators. This provides a robust evidence base for strategic decision-making, enabling leaders to identify areas of strong performance, understand variation, and prioritise improvement activity where outcomes are not yet where they need to be. The combination of performance monitoring, deep-dive activity, and external benchmarking ensures that strategic oversight remains focused, evidence-led, and outcome-driven.

Impact

- Strategic planning is informed by accurate and timely intelligence
- Leaders can identify emerging need and respond proactively
- Sufficiency planning is evidence-led
- Services are increasingly aligned to local need and demand

c) Leaders commission services effectively to meet need and improve outcomes

Hull has adopted a strategic, evidence-based approach to commissioning which is rooted in a detailed understanding of local need and a clear ambition to create an inclusive, sustainable SEND system. Through strong partnership working across the Local Authority, Integrated Care Board, academy trusts and the Hull Learning Partnership, leaders ensure that commissioning decisions are informed by data, sufficiency analysis, service evaluation and the voices of children, young people and families.

A key priority for the partnership has been the development of a comprehensive SEND sufficiency strategy to address increasing demand whilst ensuring children and young people can access the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

Strategic Investment in SEND Sufficiency

Leaders have significantly increased capacity across both mainstream and specialist provision through a planned programme of investment.

This has included:

- The creation of 177 primary Specialist Inclusion Base places
- The creation of 165 secondary Specialist Inclusion Base places
- The expansion of special school capacity through an additional 92 special school places
- Development of the new 125-place Willowfield Special School for children and young people with Severe Learning Difficulties
- Development of the proposed 60-place Midmere SEMH Satellite provision linked to Bridgeview Special School.

This investment forms part of a longer-term sufficiency strategy designed to ensure that children and young people with the most complex needs can be educated locally wherever appropriate.

Impact

As a result:

Between 120 and 150 additional children and young people each year are expected to be supported within local provision.

- More children and young people are educated within their communities, maintaining relationships with peers, families and trusted adults
- Placement stability has improved
- Reliance on independent, out-of-area and alternative provision placements is reducing
- Families benefit from greater local choice and reduced travel requirements

Leaders Commission Outreach Services to Strengthen Earlier Intervention and Inclusion



Leaders have strengthened the graduated response through targeted commissioning informed by analysis of local need and gaps in provision.

This has included:

- A dedicated Cognition and Learning Outreach Service
- A jointly commissioned Sensory Processing Outreach Service through a Section 75 agreement with the ICB
- A specialist Secondary SEMH Outreach Service linked to one of Hull's SEMH specialist provisions

These developments build on Hull's established Outreach Partnership model and ensure specialist expertise is shared across mainstream settings, enabling needs to be identified and addressed before escalation occurs.

The outreach model operates through a graduated three-tier approach:

- Tier 1: 157 professionals trained across 14 academy trusts
- Tier 2: 89 settings supported through whole-school development and environmental adaptations
- Tier 3: 419 children and young people receiving direct specialist intervention within a single term

Importantly, 66% of pupils supported through outreach services do not have an EHCP, demonstrating that support is increasingly available before statutory intervention becomes necessary.

Impact

There is strong evidence that commissioned outreach services are improving outcomes for children and young people.

Evidence demonstrates:

- Reduced likelihood of suspension and exclusion
- Increased likelihood of remaining successfully included within mainstream education
- Reduced need for specialist placements
- Improved engagement, participation and readiness to learn

Service-level data shows:

- Steps to Success has achieved a 50% reduction in suspension and exclusion risk and a 10% increase in pupils remaining within mainstream education.
- ECT Outreach has reduced the likelihood of specialist placement by 34%.
- CITE Outreach has successfully moved the majority of supported pupils into lower-risk categories for suspension and exclusion.

In addition:

- 100% of staff report increased confidence following outreach involvement
- Schools report improved classroom practice and greater confidence in meeting need
- Families report greater confidence that their child's needs can be met locally

The impact of this work was recognised nationally when Hull was highly commended through the MJ Awards for its SEND improvement and inclusion work.

Leaders have Strengthened Commissioning and Oversight of Education Otherwise Than in School and Alternative Provision

There are strong strategic leadership and management of Alternative Provision across Hull. The Head of Service for Access and Inclusion chairs termly meetings with AP leaders to review curriculum quality, attendance, safeguarding, pupil progress and compliance with statutory requirements. Strategic oversight is provided through the Alternative Provision Board which scrutinises placement

suitability, safeguarding arrangements and educational outcomes. This ensures vulnerable young people receive provision that remains ambitious, safe and focused on successful reintegration and future participation.

Leaders have transformed arrangements for Education Otherwise Than In School (EOITS) to strengthen quality, accountability and outcomes.

A dedicated weekly multi-agency EOITS panel reviews all packages against EHCP outcomes and maintains a strong focus on educational progress, wellbeing, participation and reintegration.

Importantly, EOITS provision is now commissioned predominantly through academy trusts and providers with appropriate educational expertise, reducing reliance on unregistered provision and increasing quality assurance.

Impact

- Children and young people receive education that is more closely aligned to EHCP outcomes
- Quality and consistency of provision have improved
- Ambition for vulnerable learners remains high
- Reintegration and future participation are central to planning

Leaders are now applying the same strategic approach to Alternative Provision. A full consultation and commissioning review is underway to ensure future arrangements reinforce the Local Area's ambition for inclusion, educational engagement and improved outcomes. Additional investment within the Access and Inclusion Team has enabled the recruitment of dedicated Quality of Education Officers who will strengthen oversight of intervention planning, quality assurance and reintegration pathways.

Health Commissioning Ensures Earlier Access to Support

The Integrated Care Board works closely with Local Authority partners to commission services that reduce waiting times and improve access to early intervention.

Investment has been directed towards:

- School Nursing Services
- Mental Health Support Teams
- Emotional Resilience Coaches

- Early intervention mental health pathways
- Neurodiversity support services
- Matthews Hub post-diagnostic support

Commissioning decisions are informed by service evaluation, waiting-list analysis and identified gaps in provision.

For example, following a review of the ADHD assessment waiting list, children and young people who may benefit from non-pharmacological interventions were offered support through Matthews Hub whilst awaiting assessment outcomes.

Similarly, government mission-delivery work identified Hull as an example of effective joint commissioning within the early years, highlighting the partnership's approach to health and development reviews and follow-up intervention for children who are not meeting developmental milestones.

Impact

- Children and young people receive support earlier
- Waiting times are mitigated through alternative and preventative support
- Families can access help before needs escalate
- Health and education services work together more effectively to meet need.

Overall Impact

Commissioning across the Local Area is increasingly strategic, evidence based and outcome focused. Leaders are successfully using intelligence about local need to shape provision, strengthen inclusion and increase system capacity. Investment in Specialist Inclusion Bases, outreach services, specialist provision, EOITS arrangements and early intervention health services is ensuring more children and young people receive the right support at the right time and in the right place. As a result, more children are educated locally, more needs are met within mainstream provision, fewer children require escalation to specialist placements and vulnerable learners experience greater stability, inclusion and improved outcomes.

d) Leaders evaluate services rigorously and drive continuous improvement

The partnership has established a strong culture of performance management and continuous improvement.

Monthly performance reporting, SEND Scorecards and regular benchmarking underpin robust challenge and support arrangements. Performance data is routinely used to identify strengths, areas for development and emerging risks.

Examples include:

- Elective Home Education deep dives
- Attendance analysis
- EHCP timeliness improvement activity
- AP quality assurance reviews

Leaders demonstrate a willingness to review and redesign services where improvement is required.

Capacity pressures and an increasing reliance on agency staff within IPaSS prompted a comprehensive service review and redesign to ensure the long-term sustainability, resilience, and effectiveness of the service. As part of this transformation, new roles, including Curriculum Development Officers, were introduced to strengthen specialist expertise, build capacity across both mainstream and specialist settings, and enhance the support available to children and young people with sensory and physical needs.

In parallel, leaders implemented a strategic workforce development programme, including 'grow-your-own' pathways, to develop and retain specialist practitioners within the local system. This approach has increased opportunities for staff progression, strengthened recruitment and retention, and improved the pipeline of qualified professionals supporting children and young people with visual and hearing impairments. Collectively, these actions have reduced service vulnerability, improved workforce stability, and enhanced the capacity of the local area to deliver high-quality specialist support closer to children and young people's communities.

Other Examples include:

- Alternative Provision review
- Workforce remodelling
- Educational Psychology workforce growth
- Occupational Therapy workforce development
- SEND casework service restructuring

Similar grow-your-own approaches have been successfully implemented across Educational Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Social Care and the SEND Statutory Assessment Service. These approaches have contributed to improved workforce stability, retention and continuity for children and families.

Impact

- Services improve in response to evidence and evaluation
- Workforce stability has improved
- Recruitment and retention challenges have reduced
- Leaders understand the impact services are having on children and young people

e) Leaders Have Created a Culture Where Effective Multi-Agency Working Flourishes

Partnership working is a defining strength of the Hull SEND system. Leaders have worked deliberately to establish a culture of shared responsibility, collective accountability and mutual challenge across education, health and care. Through strong governance, a shared vision for inclusion and significant investment in workforce development, the Local Area Partnership has created the conditions for effective multi-agency working to flourish.

A mature partnership exists across the Local Authority, Integrated Care Board, schools, academy trusts, early years providers, social care and the voluntary and community sector. Strategic and operational partners work collaboratively to identify need, plan provision, resolve barriers and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Partnership working is embedded through a wide range of multi-agency forums, including:

- Strategic SEND Board
- SEND Delivery Group
- Preparation for Adulthood Steering Group
- Short Breaks Pane
- EHCP Quality Assurance Processes
- Alternative Provision Board

- Early Years SENCO Focus Group
- Multi-Agency Network Panels
- Learner of Concern Processes
- Transition Tracking Panels

All strategic boards operate on a multi-agency basis and drive shared ownership of outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The EHCP audit process is a particular strength. Bringing together representatives from education, health, social care and parent carers, the process not only improves the quality and consistency of plans but also strengthens shared learning and collective accountability. The Department for Education SEND Adviser noted:

"Discussion was broader than just the writing of the EHCP, it looked at lessons learnt over previous issues as well as next steps."

The partnership between schools and the Local Authority has strengthened significantly through the Hull Learning Partnership. In a fully academised system, all academy trusts contribute to a collective approach which places SEND and inclusion at the centre of improvement activity. SEND was identified as the founding priority of the Hull Learning Partnership, reflecting the shared commitment to creating an equitable education system and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

A particular strength is the willingness of schools and trusts to share school-level data transparently and engage in challenge and support around inclusion.

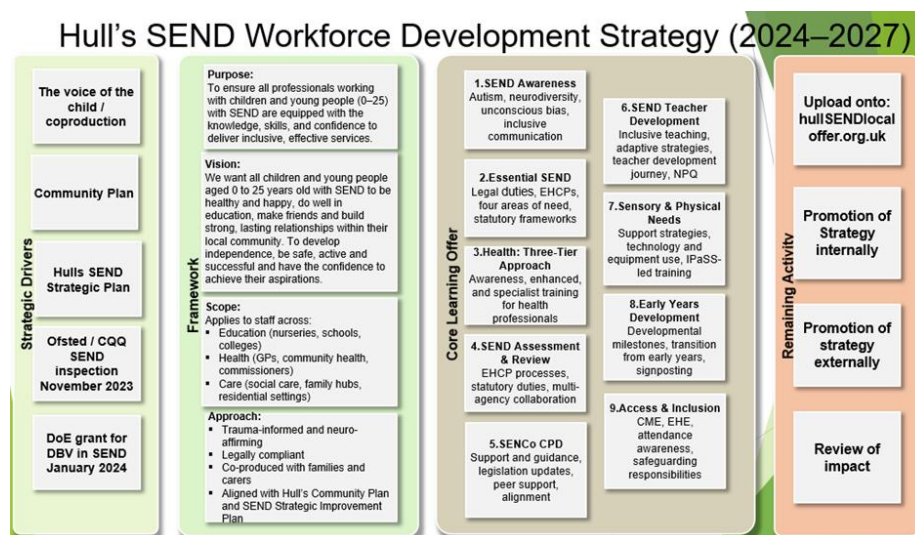
The Local Authority has also strengthened operational partnerships through a locality-based SEND casework model. SEND caseworkers are linked to individual schools and attend regular meetings with SENCOs, whilst also participating in multidisciplinary meetings within special schools. These arrangements have strengthened relationships, improved communication and enabled more effective problem-solving around individual children and young people.

Impact

- Children and young people benefit from coordinated and holistic support.
- Partners share responsibility for outcomes and inclusion
- Decision-making is increasingly collaborative and evidence informed

- Relationships between schools, health, social care and the Local Authority continue to strengthen
- Joint working is improving the quality and consistency of services across the partnership
- Schools report improved access to advice, challenge and support.
- Multi-agency decision-making ensures children and young people receive support that reflects their holistic needs

A Multi-Agency Workforce Development Strategy Is Creating a Skilled, Confident and Inclusive Workforce



Hull's award-winning SEND Workforce Development Strategy 2024–2027, recognised through a prestigious MJ Award, has established a whole-system approach to workforce development which places a clear expectation across the partnership that SEND is Everybody's Business.

The strategy brings together education, health, social care, early years, inclusion services, outreach providers and commissioned services within a single framework, creating a shared language, shared understanding and collective responsibility for improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Co-produced with parents, carers and partners, the strategy is underpinned by Hull's ambition to develop a workforce that is:

- Trauma-informed
- Neuro-affirming

- Inclusive
- Confident in identifying and responding to need at the earliest opportunity
- Committed to improving outcomes through collaborative practice

Rather than delivering training in isolation, the strategy aligns workforce development across the SEND system through nine priority learning outcomes, ensuring that professionals across all sectors understand how their role contributes to the wider partnership vision for SEND.

The strategy spans all services working with children and young people, including:

- Schools and academy trusts
- Early years settings and childminders
- Colleges and post-16 providers
- Health services
- Children's and Adult Social Care
- Family Hubs
- SEND service
- Alternative Provision
- Outreach services
- Commissioned providers

Training pathways range from universal SEND awareness and Essential SEND programmes through to specialist professional development for:

- Teachers
- SENCOs
- School leaders
- Health practitioners
- Educational Psychologists
- Social workers

- Family Hub practitioner
- SEND caseworkers
- Specialist practitioners

A significant strength of the strategy is that workforce development is genuinely multi-agency in both design and delivery. Training content is co-produced and delivered collaboratively, creating consistency across the workforce and reinforcing shared responsibility for outcomes.

For example, one component of the workforce development programme was developed jointly by:

- Outreach services commissioned by the Local Authority
- Health Speech and Language Therapy services
- Educational Psychology
- Vantage Teaching School Hub

This collaborative approach ensures professionals receive consistent messages and support regardless of professional background or organisational affiliation.

The programme continues to evolve in response to emerging need. Alongside established programmes focusing on Autism, SEMH and Cognition and Learning, further training is being developed through the Integrated Care Board's Sensory Processing Service.

The strategy has established a common language across education, health and care, enabling professionals to work more effectively together, strengthen the graduated response and implement more consistent approaches to support and intervention.

Impact

The strategy is creating a tangible difference for children and young people because the workforce around them is increasingly equipped to understand, identify and respond to need.

- Children and young people are more likely to have needs identified at an earlier stage
- Staff across education, health and care work from a shared understanding of SEND legislation, inclusion and the graduated approach

- Schools and settings are increasingly able to meet needs through ordinarily available provision
- Children and young people experience more inclusive environments and more responsive support
- Improved understanding of neurodiversity, communication needs, sensory needs and SEMH is leading to increasingly personalised interventions
- Greater professional confidence is improving the quality of assessments, EHCPs, annual reviews and interventions
- Workforce capability is strengthening across the partnership, reducing dependency on specialist services and supporting earlier intervention
- Children and families experience greater consistency because professionals are working from a common framework and shared expectations

The strategy has also strengthened accountability across the Local Area Partnership. Through shared standards, joint delivery, evaluation processes and governance arrangements, partners are collectively responsible for maintaining the knowledge and skills required to deliver high-quality SEND provision.

Impact on the SEND System

The SEND Workforce Development Strategy has become a significant driver of system improvement. By bringing together workforce development across education, health and care, Hull has created the conditions for effective multi-agency practice to flourish.

Professionals increasingly share a common language, a shared understanding of inclusion and a collective commitment to ensuring children and young people with SEND receive the right support, at the right time, from the right people. As a result, the Local Area is building a skilled, confident and sustainable workforce that is better equipped to identify needs early, remove barriers to learning and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Strategic Leadership Is Creating a More Inclusive and Sustainable SEND System

The cumulative impact of strategic leadership can be seen across the SEND system. Through a sustained focus on inclusion, partnership working, early intervention and sufficiency, leaders have created a more resilient and responsive system that is increasingly able to meet the needs of children and young people locally.

Impact

- More children and young people are educated locally within their communities
- Mainstream schools have increased capacity to meet a broader range of needs successfully
- Inclusion is strengthening across the Local Area
- More children receive support before needs escalate
- Reliance on specialist, independent and out-of-area provision is reducing
- Attendance outcomes for SEND cohorts remain stronger than national averages
- EHCP quality and timeliness continue to improve
- Children and young people benefit from stronger emotional wellbeing, health and therapeutic support
- More young people are successfully preparing for adulthood, employment and independence
- Families have greater confidence that services listen, respond and work together effectively
- The workforce is increasingly skilled, confident and inclusive
- Partnership working is delivering better experiences and improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND

Overall Evaluation

The cumulative effect of these improvements is a SEND system that is increasingly ambitious, inclusive and sustainable. Leaders have created a culture of collective responsibility across education, health and care, underpinned by strong governance, meaningful co-production and a shared commitment to improving outcomes. More children and young people are having their needs identified earlier, more needs are being met successfully within local provision and families are experiencing increasingly coordinated support. Leaders have an accurate understanding of both the strengths of the system and the areas requiring further development and demonstrate the capacity, commitment and collaborative culture required to continue driving improvement. As a result, children and young people with SEND are increasingly benefiting from stable educational pathways, improved opportunities, greater inclusion and stronger outcomes across all aspects of their lives.

10. Summary of Priorities for the next 12 months

The Local Area Partnership has made significant progress since the previous SEND inspection. Leaders have strengthened governance, improved the quality of EHCPs, expanded local provision, increased participation in supported internships, established a strong co-production culture and invested significantly in workforce development and inclusion. The next phase of improvement will focus on embedding these developments, sustaining areas of strong practice and addressing the remaining challenges identified through performance data, quality assurance activity, feedback from children, young people and families, and ongoing self-evaluation.

Priority 1: Earlier Identification, Timely Assessment and Effective Support

The partnership will build on the strong foundations already established in relation to early identification, multi-agency working and support through the graduated approach. Leaders recognise that increasing demand across neurodevelopmental, mental health and therapy pathways continues to impact timeliness of assessment and access to specialist support. Over the next 12 months, the partnership will focus on embedding the Core Needs approach, supporting children and young people based on identified need rather than diagnosis, improving EHCP timeliness, strengthening the quality of health and social care advice and ensuring that children and young people receive effective support whilst waiting for specialist assessment. This work reflects feedback from families who consistently tell us that they want earlier intervention, clearer pathways and support that is responsive to need rather than dependent on diagnosis. It also reflects leaders' ambition that children should receive the right help at the earliest opportunity, reducing escalation of need and improving long-term outcomes.

Priority 2: Inclusion, Belonging and Access to the Right Provision

The partnership will deepen its commitment to inclusion by strengthening mainstream capacity, reducing unnecessary reliance on specialist and alternative provision and ensuring that more children and young people are successfully supported within their local communities. Building on the success of the outreach model, and inclusion bases, sufficiency programme, leaders will implement the Alternative Provision review, strengthen SEMH support and continue to improve attendance, engagement and educational stability for vulnerable learners. Children, young people and families consistently tell us that being educated alongside peers, maintaining friendships and belonging within their local community are important to them. This priority therefore places a strong focus on attendance, reducing exclusions, preventing placement breakdown, reducing SEND-related EHE and ensuring that children remain visible, connected and included within their communities wherever possible.

Priority 3: Preparation for Adulthood, Independence and Positive Outcomes

The partnership will continue to build on the improvements made in Preparation for Adulthood since the previous inspection. Whilst supported internship

participation, educational outcomes and employment pathways compare favourably with national benchmarks, leaders recognise that further work is required to ensure consistently strong transition arrangements into adulthood, particularly for young people who do not meet Adult Social Care thresholds. Over the next 12 months, the partnership will strengthen transition planning, improve Adult Social Care involvement from an earlier stage, expand opportunities for independence, employment and community participation, and improve outcomes for those at risk of becoming NEET. Feedback from young people consistently highlights the importance of future employment, independent living, meaningful relationships, community participation and having greater control over their future. This priority will ensure that these aspirations remain central to strategic planning and service delivery.

Priority 4: Co-production, Participation and Family Experience

The partnership has strong examples of co-production and participation across education, health and care. Over the next 12 months, leaders will focus on embedding this consistently across all services and ensuring that participation increasingly drives system change. Building on the Co-production Charter, Parent Carer Forum engagement, Youth Voice activity, participation groups and the "You Said, We Did" approach, the partnership will strengthen opportunities for children, young people and families to influence both strategic decision-making and individual planning. Children and young people tell us that they want to feel listened to, understood and involved in decisions that affect their lives. Parents consistently tell us that clear communication, meaningful involvement and visible evidence that feedback has influenced change are important. Leaders therefore want to move beyond participation as an activity and further embed co-production as a core principle underpinning the development, delivery and evaluation of SEND services.

Priority 5: Sustainable Leadership, Workforce and Continuous Improvement

Leaders recognise that sustaining improvement requires a resilient and responsive SEND system that can respond effectively to increasing demand and changing patterns of need. Building on the award-winning SEND Workforce Development Strategy, strengthened governance arrangements, SEND scorecard and benefits realisation framework, the partnership will focus on ensuring that services remain sustainable, evidence-informed and outcome-focused. Particular attention will be given to workforce development, recruitment and retention, SEND sufficiency planning, commissioning arrangements, data intelligence and impact evaluation. Feedback from children, young people and families consistently demonstrates the importance of receiving timely support from skilled professionals who work together effectively. This priority reflects leaders' determination to ensure that strong partnership working, continuous improvement and ambitious leadership continue to deliver measurable improvements in experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.