Department for Education

NHS England

The Local SEND Reform Plan

March 2026



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1. Introduction

Document Overview

This document is designed to support local area partnerships develop a **Local SEND Reform Plan** with most sections pertaining to the local area partnership as a whole, in particular, local authorities (LAs) and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), multi-academy trusts (MATs) and schools. Sections that pertain solely to local authorities are clearly marked **Local Authorities**.

While this document addresses local area partnerships, the government's expectation is that the local authority is the system 'convener'; taking the lead to bring together all system partners and ensure they work together to develop and deliver the Local SEND Reform Plan. Similarly, the government has clear expectations on all system partners to proactively respond to the local authority's leadership, ensuring they commit resources and fulfil their responsibilities in the partnership. Central government will actively engage where system partners are not responding to the local authority's leadership.

The document contains the following:

1. **The Local SEND Reform Plan Guidance**
   Overview and a practical guide to help local area partnerships complete the plan.

2. **Local SEND Reform Plan Template – Annex A**
   The delivery plan that local area partnerships are expected to complete and return to the Department for Education and NHS England by **19 June 2026.**

3. **Supporting Documents – Annex B**
   A list of key resources and references including links to relevant policy documents, tools, and guidance referenced throughout.

The Local SEND Reform Plan

The 0-25 SEND system has been under significant and prolonged pressure, resulting in a system that is failing too many children and young people. Local services are overstretched, some children's needs are escalating unnecessarily to crisis point, and financial pressures have become unsustainable. Yet within this challenging landscape, many local area partnerships have demonstrated determination and leadership - working very hard to improve their local services and often developing compelling and innovative approaches to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. The government is committed to collaborating with local area partnerships to build on and scale what is working well.

We recognise that system-wide reform and investment is needed to deliver an inclusive and sustainable system that stands the test of time. However, realising this vision will only be possible if every local area takes full responsibility for driving significant improvement in the sustainable delivery of local services. It is imperative that all local areas begin this essential work through robust action plans that demonstrate clear ownership, ambition and accountability. This step change in the delivery of local services cannot be optional; it is a critical expectation of all local area partnerships.

As set out in the Schools White Paper, the government will reform the current SEND system, building on ongoing work to create a system that's rooted in inclusion, where every child and young person receives high-quality support early on and can thrive in their local early years setting, school or college. The government's plan is to ensure opportunity for all by delivering an excellent, inclusive education for every child with a world class education and highly trained workforce. This will be based on an inclusive mainstream education system, with professional support for children and young people that need it, and improved, efficient and effective local delivery, as detailed below.

- **Inclusive mainstream system**: most children and young people with SEND will be supported to achieve and thrive in mainstream education settings through high-quality teaching, inclusive practice, and targeted support. Settings will be equipped to create the right environments, and multidisciplinary professional support services will be commissioned at a group level to address needs efficiently.

- **Specialist support for children that need it**: Specialist settings will continue to play a vital role for children and young people who require a substantially different curriculum or highly individualised approaches that cannot be delivered in mainstream educational settings.

- **Efficient and effective local delivery**: investment in and improvement of local services, including health, care, and wider workforces and resources, will support the delivery of joined-up, place-based provision. Local authorities will work with Integrated Care Boards to commission multi-disciplinary professional support across early years settings, schools and post-16 providers, taking a whole school approach at group level, so children and young people can access the help they need. Improvement of local services eases the pressure on home to school transport, ensuring fewer children and young people with SEND need to travel a long way from home to attend a school or setting. Local authorities will work with all settings to plan and deliver the right physical spaces in mainstream nurseries, schools and colleges.

Delivering lasting change will take collective commitment and sustained effort from all of us; government, local authorities, health partners, early years, MATs, schools and colleges; working together with parents and carers to build the inclusive system our children and young people deserve.

The Local SEND Reform Plan is the key delivery and accountability vehicle for this collaborative commitment, with expectations that it is revised annually as proposed reform is rolled out. We recognise that delivery of the plan will be within the current statutory framework, as such, local area partnerships will not be required to implement any policy that is being consulted on or that will require legislative change.

This first iteration is about building on existing foundations and putting in place the groundwork for reform. It aims to:

- Support central government to understand how the SEND system is being transformed nationally, understand how investment funding is being used to achieve reform priorities, identify innovative practice that can be disseminated and scaled up, and identify where additional support may be required.

- Support local areas - local authorities, health partners, early years, MATs, schools and further education - to develop and deliver a clear pathway toward

an inclusive and sustainable local SEND system that identifies and supports needs **early**, meets needs within the **local** area, is **fair, effective** and **shared**; building on existing work and tailored to the unique context of the local area.

- Support local authorities to unlock investment funding and access support for historic and accruing deficits.

The Local SEND Reform Plan provides a framework that partnerships can use to establish a baseline for their local system and metrics against which transformation progress can be tracked.

The government, working alongside local area leadership, will use the plans - and the insights from regular progress reviews - to understand delivery, support decision-making on investment funding and access to the High Needs Stability Grant, and reflect progress on target metrics. The Department for Education, in particular, will use the plans - incorporating the data returns, local partnership maturity assessments and core local reform plan – to establish a baseline and ongoing monitoring of local area performance.

Throughout this process, DfE officials, health regional leads, SEND and financial advisers will support local area colleagues with access to tailored guidance and emerging insights to help shape and strengthen their plans. The Local Government Association (LGA) will also provide additional system leadership and transformation support through the children's and SEND improvement advisers.

2. Laying the Foundation for Reform

A central focus of this first iteration of the Local SEND Reform Plan is the introduction of the **Experts at Hand (EAH) Offer** and a strengthened approach to ensuring there are sufficient high needs places within mainstream settings, alongside a continued strengthening of effective partnerships and practice. Together, these initiatives aim to build a more inclusive and sustainable SEND system by ensuring mainstream settings, supported by collaborative and maturing partnerships, are equipped with both the right infrastructure and the specialist expertise needed to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

The Experts at Hand Offer

The Experts at Hand Offer is a core pillar of the SEND reform programme, designed to strengthen the capability of mainstream education settings to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND more effectively and inclusively.

Local areas should provide a defined route for mainstream education settings to access specialist support, including from a range of experts with specialisms in education & health, such as in, educational psychology, speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy, as well as through outreach from specialist settings. By adding support to shift to increased group-based models and whole setting advice and support, health and education professionals can deliver evidence-based support and intervention with greater impact and value, ensuring, where possible, needs do not escalate. This not only makes better use of a limited workforce but also reduces dependence on costly, individualised provision. There will continue to be children and young people with complex needs that will require individualised and tailored support to meet their needs.

We know that strong practice and effective joint working already exist in many local areas where settings are supported to strengthen inclusive practice. We are keen to ensure that local areas are building on these as they develop and scale up their offer.

Local area partnerships (Local Authorities, ICBs, and system partners including settings) are expected to build their Experts at Hand Offer so that it becomes an ongoing and embedded element of the SEND system.

In order to achieve this, as well as to support a more effective SEND system overall, we need:

- To maintain access and referrals for those children who need specialist referral pathways identified at triage based on educational and clinical need.
- Better joint working across ICBs, LAs, and local system partners including education settings, Best Start Family Hubs, Parent Carer Forums (PCFs), health providers and children and young people.
- More effective joint commissioning between LAs and ICBs, including strategic planning and co-production with children, young people and families and local partners.

- A strong universal offer and fluid layers of support which can be accessed from day one, one of which should include an offer of support for mainstream education settings giving them access to universal and targeted support from services across health and education – the new ‘Experts at Hand’ offer.

The aim of this offer is for mainstream early years settings, MATs, mainstream schools and further education providers to improve across the following areas:

1. Understanding the needs of children and young people in their setting.
2. Putting structures in place to build relationships and co-production with the parent/carer community.
3. Strengthening the baseline level of capacity of settings and staff to meet commonly occurring SEND needs.
4. Reviewing practice regularly to ensure current approaches are the most suitable.
5. Improving knowledge of when and how to draw down additional expertise when required.

This model allows for more efficient deployment of multidisciplinary professionals, promotes broader skill development across settings, and supports a more dynamic and sustainable workforce. It also puts a stronger focus on collaboration between health professionals and education settings, enhancing the role of health professionals in education and enabling them to focus on strategic support to schools and settings as well as system-wide impact.

The offer is designed to build capability within mainstream settings through joint working, empowering education staff to identify and meet a wider range of needs and enabling more children and young people to thrive in inclusive environments; and is expected to be jointly owned and resourced by the Local Authority and Integrated Care Board.

Local areas should consider how they will develop this offer to ensure there is support and appropriate provision across early years, primary, secondary, and further education settings. This should include developing effective models and partnerships for supporting young people with SEND who access further education in a different local area.

Local areas[1] have flexibility in how they commission or employ the multidisciplinary workforce required to deliver the offer. They are encouraged to explore, alongside other options, deployment through special schools and colleges, alternative provision schools, Neighbourhood Health Services, Best Start Family Hubs[2], and Multi-disciplinary Family Help Teams. Local areas will need to work with neighbouring local area partnerships and representatives of the further education sector to consider how best to deliver this service to all colleges and other post-16 providers their young people attend – including those out of their area.

Local systems are expected to begin building this offer using allocated investment funding as a core focus of their delivery in the first year, with the aim of having all Experts at Hand offers established and operational as the new reforms are introduced.

Guidance relating to the Experts at Hand offer is due to be published **in Spring 2026**.

Core minimum requirements

Experts at Hand Offer

Local area partnerships will be expected to clearly and succinctly set out in their plan:

- The delivery approach for this offer and the rationale for why the outlined approach is optimal for the local area. This will include setting out if delivery will be local authority-led, contracted to the ICB, in partnership with another area or through an external partner, and setting out the role of Best Start Family Hubs. Where delivery involves an ICB or external partner, please specify the partnership vehicle (such as an SLA or MOU) and how performance will be assured.

[1] Local areas who have been involved in ELSEC and PINS can use the structures they have in place and the learning they have gained to support the design of their offer.
[2] New guidance to be published 23 March 2026.

- A summary of the partnership approach to agreeing an optimal delivery model including how all system partners were engaged and how the approach was informed by needs-based data.
- How the EAH funding will enhance existing routes to access specialist input, and how the delivery model will be integrated with other services or offers funded separately.
- Proposal to collaboratively recommission alternative provision to align with the 3-tier model and best practice identified through Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforces (APST) models.
- Where alternative provision capacity is constrained, whether the LA will contract provision, partner regionally, or share expertise and the route chosen.
- Proposals for commissioning outreach from high-quality specialist providers, where appropriate.
- Proposal for timely access to health and education professionals (e.g., in educational psychology, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy) for early years, schools and colleges based on assessed local need.
- A detailed year 1 implementation plan, including recruitment approach and success metrics (e.g. coverage, scale of support available), and a high-level plan for years 2–3.
- A proposed governance and accountability arrangement, as part of the Local Area Partnership Board, including oversight routes, budgets and funding arrangements, reporting cadence and escalation processes. This should include a single, named LA-based SRO to drive improvement and reform.
- Clear expectations for joint governance, monitoring and shared accountability across education and health partners.
- Proposed approach to settings accessing support which ensures support is not disproportionately accessed by the most proactive schools and settings and includes out of area mainstream further education settings attended by local young people with SEND.

Embedding the Experts at Hand Offer Within a Broader Reform Strategy

Local Authorities

While the Experts at Hand Offer will be a key building block to reform, it is not sufficient on its own to deliver the scale of change required for SEND. Local authorities are encouraged to continue to take a strategic approach to **place planning and capital investment** to ensure inclusive provision is available and accessible. Guidance relating to inclusion bases (formerly SEN units, resourced provision and pupil support units – SU/RP/PSUs) is due to be published in **Spring 2026**.

To support this, we expect that local authorities will:

- Set out how High Needs capital funding will be used to invest in new places and adaptations to the physical environment so that needs of children and young people with SEND are met in alignment with the reform aims of mainstream inclusion.
- Use capital investment to improve the inclusivity of provision in all settings, considering a range of interventions that could better support children and young people with SEND through the physical environment, working with professionals who can advise and support e.g. special school/alternative provision practitioners, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, specialist nurses, mental health practitioners and support workers.
- Identify where inclusion bases (formerly SU/RP/PSUs) in mainstream schools or nurseries, or specialist provision in colleges, currently exist, where additional capacity is needed, and how this varies across planning areas.
- Engage proactively with early years providers, schools, multi-academy trusts and further education providers as well as health providers, to co-develop strategies for enabling more children and young people with SEND to access mainstream education.
- Engage with parent carer forums and children and young people forums to co-produce strategies that work for children and families.
- Ensure that decisions about the location and type of new SEND provision explicitly consider the proximity to where children and young people live and

the implications for transport, recognising this may not always be possible when commissioning SEND provision in large, further education colleges.

- Ensure that all sufficiency and capital investment decisions include an assessment of transport impact, with a focus on reducing long-distance travel and increasing access to local, inclusive settings.

Core minimum requirements

Sufficiency and Place Planning

Local area partnerships will be expected to clearly and succinctly set out in their plan:

- A summary of local sufficiency pressures and how planned place growth addresses demand trends, including EHCP drivers and opportunities to meet need through capacity in mainstream settings.
- How the planned increases in capacity across setting types will reduce reliance on special schools, especially out-of-area placements and independent specialist provision.
- How collaboration between LAs and MATs could be strengthened to identify suitable sites and jointly plan the development of inclusion bases.
- Assurance that proposed inclusion bases in early years settings, schools, and colleges would reflect local demographic need, maintaining high quality standards and clear expectations on type of provision.
- How existing school premises are factored in when planning new inclusion bases, including opportunities created by falling rolls.
- Detailed plans to meet need for specialist places, by increasing capacity in mainstream settings through inclusion bases, and to improve the suitability of the physical environment. This should set out how the investment would align with local need and reduce future pressure. Where plans propose use of high needs capital to create additional special school places, this should clearly explain why need cannot be met in mainstream, including how the investment would align with local need and reduce future pressure.
- Proposals for flexibility to accommodate rurality and local variation, ensuring provision remains viable and context appropriate.

- Evidence that an impact assessment of travel arrangements has been carried out for any capital, inclusion base or special school expansion proposal, demonstrating expected changes to travel distances, journey times, and reliance on out of area placements. Including any explicit travel related mitigations.

Strengthening Effective Partnerships and Practice

Effective collaboration across all system partners, including local authorities, ICBs, health provider organisations, Parent Carer Forums, Best Start Family Hubs, early years settings, mainstream and specialist schools, further education, dioceses, multi-academy trusts (MATs), parents carers, and children and young people with SEND, is essential to delivering meaningful transformation.

A transformed system that works for children and families must include co-production, collaborative partnership working and stakeholder engagement. Strong relationships at system and setting level are central to this.

The success of this transformation depends on shared ownership of decision-making, design and delivery of the local offer, and responsibility by all system partners, particularly local authorities, Integrated Care Boards and education settings.

The department is clear that MATs and schools have clear responsibilities in the development and active deployment of a strong universal offer of support to children and young people with SEND in their settings. They are expected to proactively collaborate with their system partners, including local authorities and ICBs, drawing on up-to-date understanding of the needs of children and young people in their settings to deliver consistent and robust support, particularly for the most commonly occurring and growing areas of need.

In the long term, MATs and schools will work together to pool some funding from their Inclusion Share for a more collaborative, efficient system to meet needs across their group and allow for better sharing of expertise and resources across an area. Local school groupings will need to be actively engaged with the local authority and Integrated Care Board. We will look to local authorities and their partners to shape the formation of groupings in their areas and have an oversight role for

these groups. In designing local systems, local authorities, MATs, schools and other system partners should start to consider how they might integrate school groups into the bigger picture, to work closely with their Experts at Hand and wider reform offer to provide a comprehensive SEND system.

We would like to work with school and local authority partners to understand how these groups are best structured while we move long-term to a system where all schools are part of strong groups. Guidance relating to school groups and pooled funding will be published in due course.

Core minimum requirements

Local area partnerships will be expected to clearly and succinctly set out in their plan:

Effective Practice - Universal Offer

- Proposal to co-develop, and regularly refresh, a partnership-wide universal offer agreement with schools, MATs, early years settings and post-16 providers which will be underpinned by up-to-date, needs-based data and signed off by the local authority, ICB, MAT and school representatives and Parent Carer Forum (PCF). The agreed universal offer should draw on approaches that will be set out in the National Inclusion Standards.
- Evidence of the processes and mechanism through which MATs and PCFs are engaged in the development of the universal offer.
- How early intervention services will be strengthened, with enhanced mainstream support to prevent escalation of need.
- How a strengthened universal offer will support mainstream settings to meet the most commonly occurring and growing areas of need. This should include how well evidenced early intervention approaches focused on speech and language (e.g. ELSEC[3]/NELI[4]), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH), could be deployed.

[3] Early Language Support for Every Child
[4] Nuffield Early Language Intervention

- How a strengthened universal offer and group level specialist support will reduce escalation into out-of-area placements with significant travel-assistance requirements.

Early Years (plans should align with LA Best Start in Life plans)

- Proposal for assessing sufficiency of current level of childcare provision for 0–5s, detailing: (a) availability of early years places; (b) availability of specialist SEND early years places; and (c) any local gaps for children with complex and emerging needs and plan to address these including the role of wider partners such as Best Start Family Hubs.
- Proposal to improve early years identification and intervention strategies, including the role of Best Start Family Hubs.
- Proposal to strengthen transitions from early years to primary school, ensuring effective information flow and timely specialist input.

Post-16

- Proposal to strengthen pathways to adulthood, supporting young people to access education, training, employment and supported internships.
- A clarification of pathways into and out of post-16 settings, informed by consistent information flow and timely, effective specialist support.

Effective Partnerships

- Evidence of effective, shared, partnership leadership and governance across all system partners, with clear and mutually understood accountability arrangements.
- Evidence of formal representation from early years, schools, MATs and further education on partnership boards, with appropriate links to Schools Forums to support coherent engagement across all settings.
- Proposal to underpin partnership working with shared, high-quality data, including joint dashboards and use of a partnership maturity matrix to assess effectiveness.

- How proposed/agreed mechanisms for engaging all schools, early years providers and post-16 providers (including out of area mainstream colleges accessed by local young people with SEND) would support collective responsibility for inclusive practice.
- Proposal to strengthen dispute resolution and decision-making processes so system partners can address issues early and consistently, supported by transparent escalation routes.
- A single named SRO who is part of the leadership team, to provide operational leadership and drive reform across the partnership. The SRO should be a senior local authority official.

Effective Co-production Practices

- Proposal to strengthen co-production arrangements so that parent carer forums are properly resourced and consistently engaged in shaping decision making.
- How the voice of children and young people is captured directly and distinctly from parent voice, with clear evidence of how their views influence decisions.
- How SENDIASS will be used to support parents carers with high quality, independent information and guidance, and how the local area will address variability in service quality where it exists, with reference to the minimum SENDIASS service standards. Please include proposed mitigation to any parental concerns about the perceived independence of SENDIASS within mediation processes.
- Proposal to adopt a minimum co-production benchmark (based on NHSE guidance) and self-assess against it in year one, identifying improvement actions where needed.

Mediation

- A description of local mediation and dispute resolution arrangements, demonstrating how they incorporate the voices of parents and children and young people.

- Proposal to maintain metrics for timeliness, resolution rates and effectiveness to support monitoring and accountability.

Governance

The Local SEND Reform Plan should be a local area partnership plan. The local authority, as the system convener, has an oversight role over the process of preparing, submitting and delivering the overall Local SEND Reform Plan with active participation from all system partners.

Governance arrangement is expected to include active representation from all key partners, including ICBs, PCFs, MATs and schools, with clear roles and accountability. Where local area partnerships involve multiple education partners – including those not always located within their area such as further education colleges – or may commission therapy services from different health providers, they should agree how those institutions/providers can be represented and have a fair voice in decision making.

The local area partnership should agree a single, named Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the Local SEND Reform Plan and local area transformation who will be responsible for overseeing SEND improvement and reform for the area. The SRO should be a senior local authority official and part of the local area partnership leadership.

The Local SEND Reform Plan should be discussed, agreed, and signed off at the relevant SEND Governance Board. As a minimum, the plan should be formally signed off by the Local Authority Chief Executive (CEO), the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Chief Executive, the Local Authority Director of Children's Services (DCS), the Integrated Care Board NHS Place Director, and the Local Authority Chief Financial Officer (CFO/Section 151 Officer), reflecting the joint statutory responsibilities for SEND across the system.

We expect your Local SEND Reform plan to be aligned with other local strategic plans you are currently developing, including your Best Start local plan. Both plans sit firmly within the government's ambition to improve child development and health

outcomes, and to create a more inclusive, high-quality system of support for all children and young people with SEND. Together, they should provide a coherent local approach to raising outcomes for children, young people and families.

Funding

To deliver our ambition for an inclusive and sustainable SEND system, the Department has secured targeted funding through the Spending Review. Some of this funding will be delivered directly to LAs and ICBs, other funding streams will be delivered to settings and will need to be considered when developing plans.

LA and ICB Funding

Funding	Description
Experts At Hand Offer Funding (for LAs and ICBs)	This funding is provided to support development of an Experts at Hand Offer which provides a defined route for mainstream education settings to access support, including but not limited to Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, and Occupational Therapy. Rather than relying on individual referrals, the offer enables a whole setting approach to group-level support, tailored guidance, and strategic advice, allowing for earlier and more impactful intervention. The funding will be paid via the Local Inclusion Partnership Grant after June 2026. LA allocations and methodology will be published in Spring 2026.
Transformation Funding **Local Authorities**	Transformation funding should support authorities to deliver the necessary changes to their local systems in line with the Schools White Paper while continuing to deliver effective and efficient services to children and young people with SEND through transition. This could be done through expanding capacity and capability within the Local Authority to deliver the required changes. For example, building data and analytical capability to enable effective monitoring of system performance so that decisions on

	delivery are informed by high quality and good use of data or building project management functions that can organise and sequence work, ensuring efficient and effective deployment of resources. The funding will be paid via the Local Inclusion Partnership Grant after June 2026. LA allocations and methodology will be published in Spring 2026.
Best Start Family Hubs Funding **Local Authorities**	This funding supports the rollout of Best Start Family Hubs across England. Best Start Family Hubs will have a children and family services professional specifically trained in working to support inclusion for children with additional needs.
High Needs Capital Funding **Local Authorities**	This funding is provided to support local authorities to provide places for children and young people with SEND, or who require alternative provision (AP). This funding is expected to fund a transformative expansion of inclusion bases, as well as adaptations to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of mainstream settings, reducing the need for pupils to travel a long way to a special school and the costs of LA arranged transport. It can also fund places in special schools for the most complex needs. More details on this funding and local allocations will be published in Spring 2026.
Inclusive Early Years Fund **Local Authorities**	We expect early years settings to use the Inclusive Early Years Fund to strengthen inclusive practices across the whole setting. This may include freeing up staff time to participate in continuing professional development (CPD), collaborate on inclusive planning, or engage in early assessments. The funding can also support activities such as adapting the curriculum, improving the learning environment, or implementing targeted, evidence-based interventions for groups of children. These approaches aim

	to embed inclusive practice into everyday provision, reducing the need for individual applications or formal diagnoses.

Local areas should consider how these funding streams will be used strategically and effectively to support reform priorities, build capacity, and ensure priority outcomes are realised.

Other Inclusion Funding

We are also investing in mainstream settings to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of more children with SEND effectively.

Funding	Description
Inclusive Mainstream Fund (for Schools, and Post-16 settings)	We expect settings to use this funding to identify commonly occurring, predictable needs such as difficulties with reading or emotional regulation and take meaningful steps to improve everyday teaching and universal provision, so that it works well for all from the outset. Settings will also be able to spend the funding on developing more targeted evidenced-based support offers such as transition support or specific group interventions for those who need them, without the need for as many formal assessments or diagnoses.

Structure of the Local SEND Reform Plan

The Plan is structured into five key sections:

1. **Vision** – What the local area partnership is trying to achieve
   The vision and goals for your local system in line with the national vision set out in the Schools White Paper.

2. **Strategy** – How the local area partnership plans to achieve it

Where the local system expects to be in the next 3 years, its theory of change, roadmap for the next 3 years and delivery plan for the first year.

3. **Monitoring and Evaluation** – How the local area partnership will know delivery is on track

   The processes for tracking progress against milestones and outcomes and reporting to decision-makers.

4. **Governance** – What action the local area partnership will take to stay on track

   The governance and processes for monitoring progress and taking action to ensure delivery remains on track.

5. **Central Government Support** – How we can help the local area partnership

   An opportunity to identify practical support from central government that will help you deliver your plan.

The Local SEND Reform Plan is set out in **Annex A**.

3. Submission, Review, and Monitoring Process

Submission

Local areas are expected to submit the first iteration of their Local SEND Reform Plan by **Friday, June 19, 2026**.

A month prior to final local leadership sign-off and formal submission of Local SEND Reform Plans; SEND and financial advisers will be available to review a final draft of local area plans to flag any significant gaps or concerns, and together with health regional leads and DfE officials, will offer intensive support if they believe a plan is at risk of not meeting the minimum quality threshold. Local area partnerships will then have an opportunity to action these concerns prior to formal submission to the department.

Local area leadership are encouraged to self-assess their plans using the ***Local SEND Reform Plan Quality Assessment Framework*** prior to sign-off and submission.

Further guidance on the submission and review process will be shared closer to the submission date.

Review

DfE and NHS England will use the plans to help identify effective, innovative practice and barriers, and identify how to effectively target support through the period of transformation.

The government will use the ***Local SEND Reform Plan Quality Assessment Framework*** to assess the quality of plans and facilitate access to the High Needs Stability Grant for local authorities.

The department will apply a consistent multi-tier assessment and moderation process to ensure that the review and assessment of plans is rigorous, consistent and fair.

DfE officials, health regional SEND leads, SEND and financial advisers will support local area partnerships in reviewing the plans using the ***Local SEND Reform Plan Quality Assessment Framework*** in the first tier.

Assessment tiers will include Regional Directors and independent senior civil servants from across the department. A SEND Delivery Board chaired by Regions Group Director-General, Tim Coulson, with DfE non-executive directors, DfE Performance and Risk Committee members and Sir Kevan Collins, the Secretary of State's delivery advisor in attendance will sign off final ratings and agree recommendations to the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State will make the final decision to approve or not to approve a plan with assessment outcomes will be communicated in September

Monitoring

DfE Officials, health regional SEND leads, SEND and financial advisers will support local areas to develop iterative reform plans and, together with the local area

leadership, jointly monitor the implementation of plans as reforms are rolled out.

The purpose of the joint monitoring is to:

i. provide assurance that funding is spent in line with reform priorities and that local area partnerships are working together to co-design and implement key changes to local service delivery, including changes to roles and responsibilities; and
ii. provide assurance that the implementation of reforms is delivering the anticipated changes and outcomes, by rebalancing the system towards early intervention, inclusive education, and sustainable local services.

DfE officials, health regional SEND leads, SEND and financial advisers will join quarterly review meetings with local area partnerships (utilising existing governance forums) to understand implementation progress and provide appropriate support and challenge as needed. Where applicable, these review meetings will be consolidated with other engagement or monitoring meetings from DfE or health regional SEND leads.

Local area leadership and officials are expected to discuss progress against the plan, including:

- Progress against key metrics
- Whether key milestones are on track to be achieved
- Whether risks are being effectively mitigated
- Identifying effective and innovative practice that can be shared; and
- Identifying where additional support may be needed or barriers unblocked.

Local area partnerships are required to provide quarterly data returns to DfE against the selected metrics outlined in the accompanying data template. DfE will, in turn, provide quarterly data reports with visualised analysis and benchmarking that will support local delivery, monitoring, and evaluation.

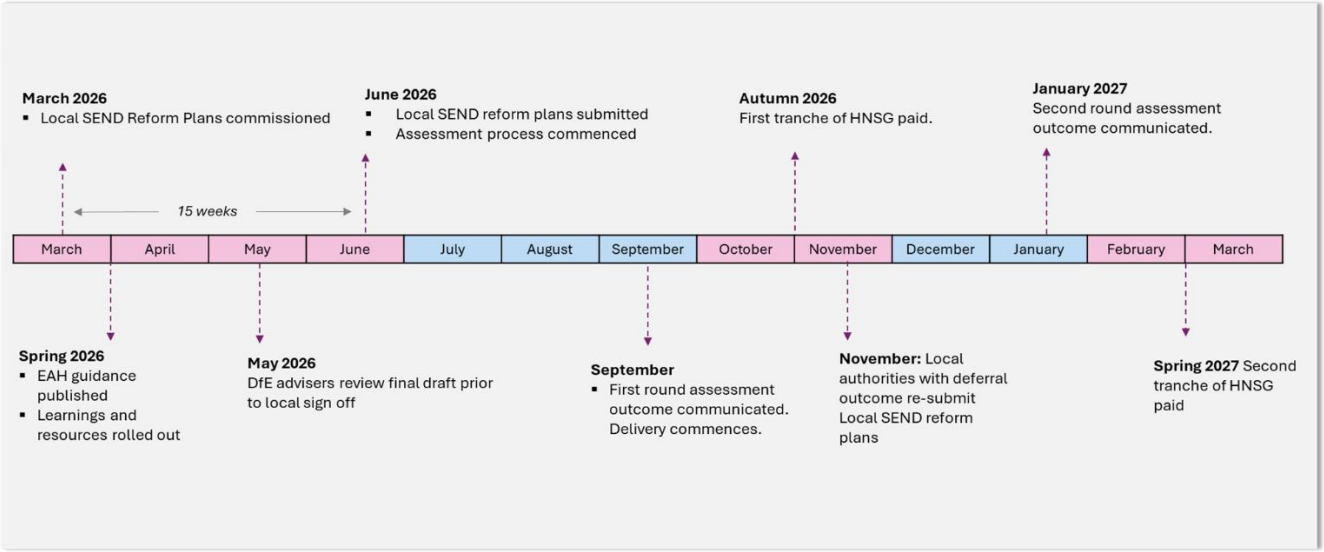
DfE officials and health regional SEND leads will use these data returns and discussions at review meetings, alongside submission of this Local SEND Reform Plan and the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment, as well as Area SEND inspection reports, to assess performance and delivery at the local level. These

assessments and this ongoing monitoring will ensure that support and engagement is best allocated and targeted throughout this period of reform.

High Needs Stability Grant

The government will address long standing SEND financial pressures by covering 90% of local authorities' High Needs-related DSG deficits accrued up to the end of 2025–26 through the High Needs Stability Grant. This grant will be paid subject to each local authority securing the Secretary of State for Education's approval of their local area's Local SEND Reform Plan. Payments will be made in Autumn 2026 for local authorities whose plans are approved. Local authorities whose plans do not meet the threshold for approval will be required to revise their plans to ensure they meet the required threshold, with appropriate support. Local authorities whose plans are subsequently approved will receive the grant payment in Spring 2027. Local authorities will not receive any payments until successful approval of their local area's Local SEND Reform Plan.

Review and payment timeline outlined below.



4. Questions

For any questions relating to this document or the Local SEND Reform Plan more widely, please get in touch with your DfE SEND Lead or contact Implementationsupport.SEND@education.gov.uk

Annex A: Local SEND Reform Plan

Developing a Local SEND Reform Plan is an important first step for local areas to set out how they will lay the foundation for reform, and design an approach tailored to their local context. A shared plan which focuses on co-designing the local approach as system partners and with children, young people and families will help foster collective responsibility for delivering the reforms.

It is critical that all system partners, including health, education and childcare settings, work together to design and deliver the Local SEND Reform Plan, under the local authority's leadership. It is also crucial that representative family carers e.g. the local Parent Carer Forum, are involved in the development of the plan.

The expectation is that this plan is discussed, agreed, and signed off at your relevant SEND Governance Board. As a minimum, the plan must be formally signed off by the Local Authority Chief Executive (CEO), the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Chief Executive, the Local Authority Director of Children's Service (DCS), the Integrated Care Board NHS Place Director, and the Local Authority Chief Financial Officer (CFO/Section 151 Officer). We encourage other colleagues and partners who have contributed to also review and sign-off the plan, particularly early years, school, college and trust leaders.

Name of Local Authority: Lambeth

Name of Integrated Care Board: NHS South East London ICB

Local SEND Reform Plan SRO: Sophie Garner, Interim Director of Education and Learning, Lambeth

Signatories

Role	Name	Signature	Email contact	Date
LA CEO	Ian Davis		IDavis@lambeth.gov.uk	19 June 2026
ICB CEO	Andrew Bland		andrew.bland@selondonics.nhs.uk	19 June 2026
Director of Children Services	Andrew Carter		ACarter@lambeth.gov.uk	18 June 2026
Local Authority Chief Financial Officer - Section 151 Officer	Zena Cooke	Zena Cooke	ZCooke@lambeth.gov.uk	19 June 2026
Corporate Director: Integrated Health & Care	Andrew Eyres	Andrew Eyres	Andrew.Eyres@selondonics.nhs.uk	18 June 2026

Executive Summary

A brief summary of your local system 'change story' – your local context, where you are now, where you want to get to in the next 3 years, how you know you are succeeding and how you will know you have achieved your vision for the next 3 years. Please include a brief qualitative summary. This summary should also include your assessment of current and forecast performance against the headline metrics.

Please structure your 'change story' using the following aims:

- *Build a 0-25 system where children and young people receive support to achieve and thrive through (a) more inclusive settings and (b) stronger local partnerships*
- *Improve capacity and capability of the mainstream and specialist workforce to identify and meet need*
- *Improve confidence of children, families, and stakeholders in reform and readiness of the system*
- *Stabilise finances and improve value for money*

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Lambeth's local system change story is rooted in a shared ambition to create a fully inclusive 0–25 SEND system where children and young people achieve and thrive through earlier intervention, stronger partnerships and improved local provision. Lambeth already demonstrates strengths in mainstream inclusion, integrated partnership working and co-production, with approximately 50% of children and young people with EHCPs educated in mainstream settings, a low permanent exclusion rate and reduced reliance on independent specialist provision.

However, our local area maturity assessment (attached) identified areas requiring further development, including inconsistency in inclusive practice across settings, increasing SEMH and autism demand, workforce recruitment challenges and variable family experience. Over the next three years, Lambeth will address these challenges through the work of our SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025-2030 (attached) and the implementation of the Experts at Hand (EaH) locality model, expansion of SEND Inclusion Units, strengthened outreach and therapies support and improved multi-agency delivery, with a clear focus on providing earlier, more consistent and accessible support.

We will build a more inclusive and sustainable 0–25 system through locality-based clusters aligned to Best Start Family Hubs and Integrated Neighbourhood Plans. Through these arrangements, schools and settings will access timely multidisciplinary support, strengthening graduated response pathways and increasing the proportion of need met effectively at SEN Support. Workforce capability will be enhanced through expanded Area SENCo, Educational Psychology, SEMH and therapies provision, alongside a continued focus on embedding consistent inclusive practice across mainstream settings.

This model is expected to reduce unnecessary escalation and progressively strengthen mainstream capacity. Our forecast performance indicates modest EHCP cohort growth from 3,350 in January 2026 to 3,583 by January 2030, with growth concentrated within secondary-aged pupils and SEMH and SLCN need. Whilst EHCP numbers are forecast to continue increasing in line with rising need, strengthened mainstream inclusion and earlier intervention are expected to moderate future growth compared with historic trends.

Over this period, we aim to reduce the cohort in out of borough and independent special school places, by increasing the number of EHCP pupils educated within mainstream settings by circa 13%, reflecting an increased ability of mainstream settings to meet a wider range of needs locally. Improved inclusion will enable more children and young people to be supported effectively without escalation to statutory processes, reducing reliance on high-cost specialist and independent provision over time.

Success will be demonstrated through measurable improvements across inclusion, demand and system outcomes, including increased resolution at SEN Support, improved attendance, reduced exclusions and reduced reliance on independent specialist provision. These

changes are expected to contribute to a slowing trajectory of EHCP growth and improved financial sustainability across the High Needs system.

This approach ensures financial sustainability is delivered through strengthened inclusion, earlier intervention and improved local provision, rather than reliance on specialist expansion. SEND reform is fully integrated with wider children's services transformation, including Family Hubs, Integrated Neighbourhood working and other measures providing a coherent, place-based and outcome-focused approach to improving experiences and outcomes for children and young people.

Section 1 – Vision and Goals

1. **What the local area partnership is trying to achieve?**

   Please set out your goals for your local system. These should be clear, aligned to the vision set out in the Schools White Paper, small in number and measurable. These goals should include clear reference to:

   - Outcomes for children
   - Confidence of parents, carers and young people in the system
   - Management of finances to secure value for money

Lambeth SEND Vision and Goals

Lambeth's vision is to establish a fully inclusive, high-performing 0–25 SEND system in which children and young people are supported to thrive through earlier, more coordinated intervention, strong partnership working and increased capacity within local provision. The borough enters this next phase of reform from a position of relative strength, with established co-production, effective governance and a sustained commitment to mainstream inclusion reflected in strong placement patterns and low exclusion rates.

The Local Partnership Maturity Assessment has, however, highlighted the need to address inconsistencies in inclusive practice, rising demand—particularly in SEMH and neurodevelopmental need—workforce pressures and variability in family experience. Over the next three years, Lambeth will respond through a coherent, locality-based model of delivery, centred on the Experts at Hand approach, expanded SEND Inclusion Units, and strengthened outreach, therapy and multi-agency provision.

Through geographically aligned clusters linked to Family Hubs and Integrated Neighbourhoods, mainstream settings will have timely access to multidisciplinary expertise, enabling needs to be met earlier and more consistently. This will enhance the graduated response, increase confidence across the workforce, and ensure that a greater proportion of children's needs are effectively supported at SEN Support.

This model will support a sustained shift towards inclusion, with modest EHCP growth, increased mainstream placement, and reduced reliance on specialist provision over time. Success will be demonstrated through improved inclusion outcomes, stronger family confidence and a more sustainable, resilient SEND system that delivers consistent, high-quality experiences for all children and young people.

Section 2 – Strategy

2. **Where the local area partnership expects to be in the next 3 years**

A description of what your local system would look like in the next 3 years in line with the national vision set out in the Schools White Paper and set within the context of where you are starting from as a local system.

In particular, as commissioning system partners, you should reflect on and agree what your fully fledged **Experts At Hand Offer** model should be and how this will be deployed via mainstream settings and providers (including those not based in your area – e.g. further education colleges attended by your young people) to build their capacity as well as identify and meet the needs of children and young people earlier and without the need for a statutory assessment for Education, Health and Care.

To help you fully consider the scope and scale of change required, you may find it useful to structure your response using these 4 building blocks of an inclusive system, reflecting on what is working well in your system, what you are most worried about, what needs to change, and how the enablers will help you achieve your 3 year vision.

When summarising where your local area partnership currently is, please include an assessment of where you are in reference to the core minimum requirements above and how you bridge the gap, making reference to and attaching additional documents that provide underlying evidence for your summary.

Strengthening inclusion across education settings– organising places and provision to meet as many needs as possible, as close to home as possible, with all settings and providers moving towards a shared understanding and consistent practices around inclusion.

System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production – putting in place the enabling conditions across a local area that ensures planning and provision reflects the local area & is joined up, including strategic co-production with parent carers and children and young people.

Access to specialist support and local placements – improving collaboration between settings and deploying expertise from a range of specialist and expert sources, to support schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people earlier and locally.

Encouraging inclusive culture & behaviours – using funding and shared accountability towards a system that works for children and families while achieving value for money.

Lambeth SEND Local Area Partnership: 3-Year Focus and Delivery

Alignment to DfE SEND Reform Plan Core Requirements: The table in annex D of this plan demonstrates how Lambeth's SEND Reform Plan aligns with DfE expectations for effective local SEND system reform, providing clear signposting to where each core requirement is addressed within the plan.

Over the next three years, Lambeth will deliver a fully integrated, inclusive SEND system aligned with the national vision set out in the Schools White Paper, in which children and young people receive timely, high-quality support within their local community, without unnecessary escalation to statutory processes. Building on a strong foundation of partnership working, improving governance, and expanding inclusive provision, the system will move from variable practice to consistent, high-quality experiences across all settings.

At the heart of this transformation will be a fully embedded Experts at Hand (EaH) model, operating through locality-based clusters aligned to Family Hubs and integrated neighbourhoods. This model will provide earlier access to specialist expertise (education, health and care) directly into mainstream schools, early years settings and further education providers, building workforce capability and enabling needs to be identified and met at the earliest point. As a result, the system will reduce reliance on statutory assessment and specialist placements, supporting more children to thrive within mainstream provision.

By 2029, Lambeth will demonstrate a system where inclusion is the norm, with confident, well-supported mainstream settings delivering high-quality adaptive practice, supported by strong outreach, integrated therapies, and aligned commissioning. Children, young people and families will experience a joined-up system, characterised by co-produced solutions, consistent communication, and clear routes to support.

Through strengthened data, workforce development, and sustained capital investment, Lambeth will deliver a system that is financially sustainable, outcome-driven, and focused on improving long-term life chances, ensuring children and young people with SEND are visible, valued, and supported to succeed.

These outputs are expected to drive improved outcomes, including earlier identification of need, increased proportions of children whose needs are met at SEN Support, reductions in waiting times for therapy and specialist input, improved attendance and engagement, and a sustained increase in the proportion of children and young people with EHCPs successfully supported within mainstream settings. Over

time, this will contribute to moderated EHCP growth, reduced reliance on high-cost independent placements and more consistent experiences for families across the system. Success is defined not only by delivery completion, but by demonstrable improvements in inclusion, timeliness, educational outcomes and preparation for adulthood.

The Lambeth Experts at Hand (EaH) model has been designed to extend and strengthen existing SEND services, rather than replace them. It provides additional capacity across the system, enabling earlier access to specialist advice, increased reach across all settings and a more consistent delivery model aligned to locality need.

Central to this planned approach is a robust and embedded model of triangulation, ensuring that impact is understood in a holistic and credible way. Performance is assessed through the integration of quantitative data—such as attendance trends, exclusion rates, EHCP demand, SEN Support resolution rates and placement patterns—with qualitative insight from children, young people and families, including annual surveys and “You said, we did” feedback, alongside operational intelligence from schools, practitioners and multi-agency panels. This triangulated evidence (illustrated further in the assumptions tab from the data template attached) enables a shared and transparent understanding of whether delivery is improving outcomes in practice, identifies variation between localities or cohorts, and highlights where additional support or intervention is required. Clear implementation review points, including monthly operational monitoring and termly strategic governance, ensure that progress against key indicators is routinely assessed. Local assumptions have been informed by the helpful support from Mime in assisting in producing the Lambeth SEN Cohort Animation tool (attached) and aligning with our partnership intentions as set out in the local area maturity assessment tool.

Defined thresholds for success—such as improvements in mainstream inclusion rates, reductions in escalation to statutory processes, and improved attendance for pupils with SEND—inform decisions to scale effective approaches, adapt delivery models or redesign provision where impact is limited. Through this disciplined focus on outcomes, evidence and triangulation, the blueprint establishes a mature, responsive system that is able to demonstrate sustained improvement, continuously refine delivery and deliver better, more consistent outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The Lambeth SEND Reform Plan: Enablers – Workforce, Capital and Data Systems

The delivery of Lambeth’s SEND Reform Plan as set out in this blueprint section is underpinned by a set of core enabling conditions that ensure the system is not only well designed, but fully resourced, coordinated and capable of delivering sustained improvement. Workforce,

capital investment and data and digital infrastructure operate collectively to support implementation, strengthen system capacity and ensure that delivery remains focused on improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Workforce capacity and capability are central to the reform programme. Through the locality-based Experts at Hand model, capacity is increased via the expansion of Area SENCo teams, Assistant Educational Psychologists and access to multidisciplinary support. This is coupled with a structured programme of professional development, coaching and in-school modelling, ensuring that specialist expertise builds sustainable capability across the wider workforce. This approach strengthens inclusive practice within mainstream settings, enables earlier intervention and increases the system's ability to meet need at SEN Support, resulting in improved inclusion, reduced escalation to statutory processes and more consistent outcomes.

Capital investment plays a critical role in delivering the future-state vision by ensuring that local provision is sufficient, accessible and aligned to need. Investment in SEND Inclusion Units, mainstream adaptations and targeted expansion of provision is directly informed by sufficiency forecasting and demand modelling. This ensures that additional capacity is created within inclusive, local settings, increasing mainstream inclusion and reducing reliance on high-cost independent placements. By aligning capital investment with strategic priorities, the system is able to improve placement stability, strengthen local pathways and support long-term financial sustainability.

Data and digital infrastructure underpin delivery, monitoring and continuous improvement across the system. A shared performance framework, supported by enhanced dashboards and forecasting tools, provides real-time visibility of key indicators including inclusion, attendance, demand and placement trends. This quantitative data is triangulated with qualitative feedback from children, young people and families, alongside operational intelligence from schools and practitioners, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of impact. This enables evidence-informed decision-making across all levels of the system, supporting the scaling of effective practice, targeted intervention where needed and continuous refinement of delivery approaches.

Together, these enablers ensure that the SEND Reform Plan is not only strategically coherent, but operationally deliverable. By aligning workforce capacity, capital investment and data insight to system priorities, Lambeth has established the conditions required to sustain improvement, respond to emerging need and deliver better outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The table below sets this framework of intentions out in further detail.

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
• **Strengthening Inclusion across education settings** • **System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production** • **Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours** • **Access to specialist support and local placements**	*Please see supplementary documents including Self Evaluation (April 2026) SEND and data dashboard* ***Strengthening Inclusion across Education Settings*** ***Strengths*** • *A broad outreach team, led by the Senior Strategic Area SENCo, delivering behaviour and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) support, the Autism Advisory Service and sensory services.* • *A well-established and well-attended SENCo network, although secondary school representation lacks engagement.* • *The Three Tier Approach is now in its second year and is well established. Schools are engaging positively, with 80% of pupils attending a Tier 2 Alternative Provision placement successfully reintegrated into mainstream education, compared to none prior to the introduction of the model.* • *A permanent exclusion (PEX) rate of 0.4%, below both national averages and statistical neighbours.* • *Robust panel arrangements and decision-making structures supporting effective multi-agency practice.*	Please see supplementary documents including SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy (2025 – 2030) and Forecasting Tool Children and young people with SEND will be able to access the right support at the earliest opportunity through an approach that is both inclusive and financially sustainable. We are committed to maintaining a high proportion of children and young people with EHCPs in mainstream settings within Lambeth, supported by strong attendance, positive outcomes and high aspirations. Our workforce will continue to develop the skills and capacity required to identify and respond to a wide range of needs as early as possible. Investment in the Experts at Hand (EaH) offer, SEND Inclusion Units, capital developments within mainstream settings, and strengthened partnership working across education, health and social care will support the following outcomes over the next three years: • **Modest EHCP cohort growth:** Through proactive work to reduce unnecessary EHCNA requests for lower-banded needs, projections indicate only modest growth in the EHCP cohort. Forecasting models show an increase from 3,350 pupils in January 2026 to 3,583 by January 2030, representing comparatively low growth at 2%. • **Growth in SEMH and SLCN need:** The largest projected increases are within Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
	• *Sufficiency planning has expanded SEND Inclusion Units in oversubscribed schools.* • *Approximately 50% of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are educated in mainstream settings.* • *Improved early identification through health pathways, including Section 23 notifications.* • *A low tribunal rate, supported by timely and consistent decision-making processes.* • *A coordinated pre-school offer across health, education and social care for children with autism and complex needs.* • *EOTAS school nurses effectively identify and respond to the health needs of children and young people not in education.* • *Strong collaboration between CAMHS and Community Paediatrics ensures joined-up support for SEND and mental health needs.* • *A strengthened Children with Disabilities Service, now operating as an integrated 0–25 Service in partnership with Adult Social Care.* • *The EHC Hub is improving access to services and information for families.* ***Areas for Focus*** • *Ensure the quality of services and experiences is consistent across all settings and not dependent on*	Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), both forecast to grow by approximately 20% over four years. Targeted support through the EaH offer, including an expanded Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) offer and the introduction of WellComm across primary settings, will strengthen early identification and intervention. • **Growth in mainstream inclusion:** We forecast a 13% increase over the next four years in the number of pupils with EHCPs educated within mainstream schools, including SEND Inclusion Units. This reflects our commitment to reducing reliance on independent special school placements through strengthened inclusive practice, expansion of SEND Inclusion Units and targeted High Needs Capital investment. **Supporting Educational Settings to be Inclusive** We want mainstream education in Lambeth to be inclusive for children and young people with a wide range of needs. Over the next three years, we will strengthen and enhance mainstream support to prevent escalation of need and improve outcomes. This enhanced offer will be delivered through: • the Three Tier Approach; • the Experts at Hand (EaH) offer; • the Exceptional Needs Grant; • outreach services; and • strengthened partnership working with health services. As patterns of need continue to evolve, the EaH offer will support schools to strengthen inclusive practice

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
	isolated pockets of strong practice. • *Address inconsistencies in universal provision and adaptive teaching approaches across schools.* • *Support transition arrangements for the Alternative Provision setting undergoing a change in trust provider.* • *Further develop SEND knowledge and confidence within the early years workforce.* • *Improve local availability and consistency of therapy services.* • *Address inconsistencies in family experience, including areas of poor practice.* • *Respond to continued high demand for ADHD and autism assessments, while expanding capacity and reducing waiting times.* • *Strengthen recruitment and retention within outreach and advisory services, particularly Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Speech and Language Therapists (SALTs).* • *Progress recommissioning of Short Breaks, Domiciliary Care and Continuing Health Care (CHC) services to improve quality and choice.* • *Improve awareness and accessibility of short break pathways, including more inclusive opportunities for families.*	through a locality-based cluster model and a single referral portal, The Gateway. This will promote greater consistency in inclusive practice across mainstream settings and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. A strengthened universal offer and group-level specialist support through EaH will reduce escalation into out-of-area placements and minimise the need for significant SEND transport expenditure. The EaH offer will expand system-wide capacity to support mainstream inclusion and embed consistent practice across settings. **Experts at Hand (EaH) Delivery Model (model covered in more detail in annex E)** The EaH model will operate through seven locality-based clusters aligned to Best Start Family Hubs and Integrated Neighbourhood Plans. This approach enables support to be delivered within local contexts while strengthening collaboration and shared expertise between schools and services. Delivery will be led by the Local Authority through the Area SENCo Team and a newly established Assistant Educational Psychologist (AEP). Through the locality cluster model and Gateway access, EaH increases access to specialist expertise at an earlier stage, enabling schools to respond to emerging needs before escalation. This supports increased resolution at SEN Support, reduces reliance on statutory processes and ensures that specialist input is delivered proactively and equitably across the system.
	System Leadership, Local Partnership	Programme. Each cluster will be supported by:

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
	Collaboration and Co-production Strengths • *A co-produced SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025–2030, supported by annual action plans that drive collaboration and continuous improvement.* • *Strong system leadership and governance through the SEND and Alternative Provision Operational Board, SEND Strategic Board and Children and Young People's Alliance, with broad stakeholder representation.* • *Clear strategic alignment between Strategic and Operational Boards, with shared priorities and direction.* • *Established operational decision-making structures with strong multi-agency engagement, including SEND and Tripartite Panels.* • *Well-established feedback mechanisms, including SEND Family Surveys, Children and Young People Surveys, and Partnership Health Checks, with growing participation and influence.* • *A fully integrated children's commissioning team that effectively utilises opportunities for joint commissioning across the Council and Integrated Care Board (ICB), with SEND Reforms and Expert and Hand requirements providing further opportunities for development.*	• an Area SENCo; • Assistant Educational Psychologists; • ICB-commissioned therapy services, including SALT and Occupational Health (OH); and • wider outreach and specialist teams. Cluster leads will coordinate: • annual needs analysis; • strategic inclusion planning; • pooled funding accountability; • continuing professional development (CPD); and • whole-school approaches to inclusion. The new AEP Programme, supported by Educational Psychologists and an expanded therapy offer, will deliver cluster-level CPD alongside practical, school-based support. **Core Offer to Clusters** • Annual needs analysis • Cluster CPD programme • In-school modelling and coaching • SENCo peer supervision • Inclusion Unit reviews • Multi-disciplinary consultation involving EPs, SALT and Area SENCos • Reintegration pathway planning • Inclusion strategy implementation support • Extended governor support • Extended parent and family support To support local Further Education provision, we will initially focus on South Bank Colleges, our largest FE provider with the Educational Psychology Service providing three annual CPD/workshop sessions on themes such as: • relational practice (ARC);

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
	• *Strong co-production and engagement with children and young people, with clear examples of their views shaping service delivery.* • *A well-established and highly valued Parent Carer Forum that is recognised positively by both families and partners.* ***Emerging Priorities*** • *Develop a clearer line of sight between governance activity and measurable outcomes for children*	• Preparing for Adulthood (PfA); and • eliciting student voice. Each workshop will include structured follow-up sessions to support reflection, implementation and embedding into practice. We will expand this offer following initial pilot review with South Bank Colleges. A new School Improvement Advisor role with a SEND specialism will also be established to strengthen consistency alongside existing School Improvement Advisors.
	and young people with internal improved data dashboards. • *Broaden engagement with community and parental groups beyond Lambeth Parent Forum.* • *Improve measurement of the impact of Young People and Families Surveys through a stronger "You Said, We Did" approach.* • *Increase integrated working across therapies, Educational Psychology services and outreach teams to strengthen whole-school approaches.*	**Investing in Educational Settings to Increase Specialist Provision** We recognise that some children and young people will require specialist educational provision to achieve positive outcomes. We will continue to work closely with settings that demonstrate strong inclusive practice and positive SEND outcomes to expand provision through SEND Inclusion Units. Planning will continue jointly with health partners to ensure timely access to specialist support. Over the next four years we aim to: • increase the proportion of children and young people with SEND educated in mainstream settings by over 15%; • reduce the use of independent special school placements by 8.5%; and • achieve a 5% reduction in current expenditure on independent specialist provision.
	Encouraging Inclusive Culture and Behaviours ***Strengths*** • *Evidence of targeted training and workforce development in some areas, alongside a strong recognition of the importance of a skilled workforce across the system.* • *An active SEND Youth Council and*	**Early Identification and Access to Support** We will continue to strengthen our Early Years offer and multi-agency approaches to early identification

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
	meaningful engagement with Parent and Carer Forums to support, challenge and shape workforce development. • *ICB-commissioned targeted Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) training for early years settings.* • *A skilled workforce supporting early identification of need and integrated pre-school and early years support.* • *Access to specialist consultation and guidance from the Designated Clinical Officer, supporting professionals to respond effectively to complex needs.* • *Sustained investment in children's centres through programmes such as A Better Start and Start for Life, supporting evidence-based early intervention and workforce development.* • *Improved joint working across health, education and social care,*	and intervention. Wherever needs emerge in a child or young person's journey, support will be provided as early as possible, including outside of statutory EHCP processes where appropriate. A strengthened universal offer will support mainstream settings to meet the most common and emerging areas of need, particularly speech, language and communication needs. As part of the EaH offer: • the WellComm assessment tool, already embedded within Early Years provision, will be extended into primary schools; • WellComm will support identification and targeted intervention in Reception and Year 5 cohorts; • up to 20 schools per term will be supported on a rotational basis throughout the year by expansion of the SALT team. Early Years group consultations will also be established through geographical clusters led by the expanded Educational Psychology Team.
	strengthening the quality of multi-agency EHCP contributions. • *Delivery of Early Years training through Dingley's Promise.*	**Strengthening the SEMH Offer** In Lambeth, demand relating to SEMH has increased in both volume and complexity and is forecast to continue to increase especially in secondary schools. Schools are responding to higher levels of behavioural need, attendance concerns and mental health challenges, alongside changing statutory expectations. The SEMH offer will increasingly focus on prevention, capacity building and system leadership, rather than reactive intervention after needs escalate. This will include: • Family Support Mentors;
	Access to Specialist Support and Local Placements ***Current Position*** • *Lambeth demonstrates strong mainstream inclusion, with almost 50% of pupils with EHCPs educated in mainstream schools and positive outcomes for pupils with SEND.*	

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
	Strengths • *More than £11 million has been allocated to expand SEND provision.* • *Over the past three years, an additional 257 SEND places have been created for children and young people.* • *Multi-agency teams, including Area SENCos, Early Years specialists and outreach teams, provide support to schools and settings through shared*	• SEMH Pupil Mentors supporting reintegration and transitions; • mentoring and counselling provision; • SEMH Advisors for primary and secondary phases; and • a single portal referral system for schools to access both cohort and individual pupil support across SEND services. Alongside this, a redesigned SEND Gateway model will be introduced.
	expertise, early identification and intervention. • *The Hub digital system supports joint working and timely EHCP processes.* • *Schools report positive feedback regarding the Area SENCo team and SENCo Network.* • *Decisions are informed by sufficiency planning and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) intelligence.* • *Reduced reliance on independent special school placements.* • *A comparatively strong position regarding the high-needs block but unsustainable and now in deficit.* ***Areas for Focus*** • *Inclusive culture and behaviours are not yet consistently embedded in practice across all settings.* • *Confidence and expectations within mainstream settings vary, resulting in some children and young people*	**Partnership Working Across Education, Health and Care** Staff across Lambeth Council, NHS South East London ICB and educational settings will continue to work collaboratively to provide coordinated support for children and young people with SEND and their families. By 2030, children, young people and families will experience a genuinely joined-up approach across education, health and social care, with timely access to high-quality services. This will be achieved through: • ensuring EHCPs and individual support plans are jointly owned and developed across services; • using robust data and intelligence to inform decision-making; and • maintaining an accessible and up-to-date Local Offer that supports families and practitioners to understand available services across the partnership.
	experiencing unmet need, delayed support or exclusion as needs	**Co-production and System Leadership** We will continue to strengthen system leadership and

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
	escalate. • *Graduated responses are applied inconsistently, and behaviours that challenge are too often viewed as compliance issues rather than indicators of unmet need.* • *Families report mixed experiences regarding how effectively they are listened to and involved in decision-making.* • *Strong inclusive practice exists but is not yet systematically embedded or shared across the system.* • *Collaboration between settings and earlier deployment of specialist expertise require further strengthening.* • *Increase opportunities for all staff, not solely SENCos, to access specialist SEND training and support.* • *Expand outreach and specialist support so expertise is available to more schools at an earlier stage*	governance arrangements to ensure that children, young people and families influence operational and strategic decision-making. By 2030: • children, young people and families will have meaningful opportunities to contribute to individual planning, service design and strategic development; • co-production activity will demonstrate clear examples of impact and influence. We will achieve this through: • sustaining engagement forums for young people; • strengthening family feedback mechanisms through annual surveys and engagement activities; • publishing "You Said, We Did" outcomes through the Local Offer; and • continuing to work closely with Lambeth Parent Forum while broadening engagement with advocacy groups that reflect the diversity of the borough.
	• *Improve communication and data sharing across education, health and social care to support more coordinated interventions.* • *Increase visibility and accessibility of the Local Offer so that families and schools better understand available support and routes to access.* ***Priorities for Development*** • ***Capital and Investment:*** *Continue investment in SEND Inclusion Units and specialist provision within*	**Embedding Inclusive Culture and Practice** Inclusive culture and behaviours will become the expected norm across Early Years, mainstream schools, Alternative Provision and post-16 settings. Leaders and practitioners will share a common understanding that inclusion is everyone's responsibility, reinforced through the EaH support and will impact on leadership, governance and commissioning arrangements. Mainstream settings will be increasingly confident and proactive in meeting a wide range of needs through early, relational and flexible approaches prior to

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
	mainstream schools, planned jointly with health partners. • ***Workforce:*** *Deliver universal SEND training for all staff, embed specialist roles such as DSCO/DCO functions, and expand outreach and Area SENCo capacity.* • ***Data and Digital:*** *Further develop The Hub and operational dashboards to improve multi-agency data sharing, quality assurance and early intervention.*	escalation. Children and young people with SEND will experience: • belonging; • participation; • high aspirations; and • improved outcomes. Families will experience practice that is: • consistent; • transparent; and • collaborative. All frontline staff will feel confident supporting families of children and young people with SEND, including understanding referral pathways and access to information and support.
		Developing a Sustainable SEND Transport System We will review the commissioning and delivery model for SEND transport across the 0–25 age range to ensure services remain sustainable and deliver value for money. This will include establishing an LA based Independent Travel Training Team to: • promote independence; • increase flexibility; and • support preparation for adulthood outcomes. ***IMPACT, OUTCOMES AND TRIANGULATION*** ***Activities → Outputs → Outcomes (progress against baseline):*** • ***Activities:*** *Experts at Hand (EaH), Inclusion Units expansion, workforce development, Gateway model*

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
		• ***Outputs:*** *% schools engaged, CYP supported, increased therapy capacity, live dashboards* • ***Outcomes:*** *earlier intervention, increased mainstream inclusion, improved attendance, reduced high-cost placements, improved family experience* ***Triangulation of Evidence:*** • ***Quantitative:*** *performance dashboards, demand and outcomes data* • ***Qualitative:*** *parent/carer feedback, CYP voice, SENDIASS themes* • ***Operational:*** *school feedback, practitioner insight* *→ Ensures a single, shared understanding of impact* ***Decision Thresholds:*** • *Low engagement → targeted redesign* • *Capacity pressure → phased prioritisation* • *Limited impact → model adaptation or commissioning change* ***Review and Governance:*** • *Monthly operational review* • *Termly strategic review* • *Annual reset* • *Escalation triggered by performance variance, demand pressure, lived experience concerns* ***Expected Impact By 2030 (evidence of progress against baselines):*** • *Needs met earlier and locally* • *Consistent inclusive practice across settings* • *Moderated EHCP growth* • *Improved system sustainability and value for money* • *Positive and consistent family and CYP experience*

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years

Success measures
Drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template:
• ***Reduced exclusions, suspensions and managed moves for children and young people with SEND***
• ***Improved attendance and engagement for pupils with SEND in mainstream provision***
• ***Increased parental confidence and satisfaction in mainstream inclusion***
• ***Reduced escalation to statutory assessment through effective graduated responses***
• ***Greater consistency in inclusive practice across settings, evidenced through QA and outcomes data***
• ***Earlier access to specialist expertise (without escalation) and CYP supported by specialist professionals without an EHCP Measure: Number of children and young people supported by: Speech & Language Therapy Occupational Therapy Educational Psychology without an EHCP or specialist placement***
• ***Increasing numbers of CYP with SEND placed in mainstream and SEND Inclusion Units***
• ***Increase capacity in SEND Inclusion Units including assessment places***
	Baseline
	
	See attached data dashboard – January 2026
		Target Metrics
		
		The following target metrics will be used to monitor progress:
		EHCP Cohort Growth
		• *Forecasting models project the EHCP cohort increasing from 3,350 children and young people in January 2026 to 3,583 by January 2030.*
		Phase Trends in EHCP Growth
		• *Forecasting indicates that growth will be concentrated within the secondary phase rather than primary.*
		Primary Need Trends
		• *The largest areas of projected growth are within:*
		  ○ *Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH); and*
		  ○ *Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).*
		• *Both areas are forecast to increase by approximately 20% over the next four years.*
		Mainstream Inclusion
		• *The number of pupils with EHCPs educated within mainstream settings, including Resource Bases and SEND Inclusion Units, will increase by 13% over the next four years.*
		• *This reflects the strategic ambition to strengthen inclusive mainstream provision and reduce reliance on specialist placements where needs can be appropriately met locally.*
		Specialist Provision
		• *We will ensure Current forecasting does not indicate growth in the number of children and young people requiring special school*

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
• ***Reduction in number of CYP placed in Specialist and independent provision*** • ***EHCPs consistently co-produced across education, health and care*** • ***Earlier identification and reduced escalation: Rate of EHCNA requests to remain at 2% or below*** • ***Improvements in outcomes at KS2 and KS4 for EHCP and SEND Support*** • ***Reduction in Persistent Absence and Severe Absence in mainstream for CYP that are SEND Support or EHCP.***		*placements.* • *Expansion of inclusive mainstream provision and strengthened outreach support are expected to mitigate demand for additional specialist placements.*
		Attendance and Participation Targets ***Persistent and Severe Absence*** *We aim to reduce persistent absence and severe absence for children and young people with SEND to levels below national averages.* *Performance monitoring will include:* • *baseline measures;* • *annual milestone trajectories; and* • *target benchmarks aligned to national comparators.* *The SEND dashboard and associated performance framework will provide ongoing monitoring and evidence of impact.*
		Inclusion and Placement Targets ***Mainstream Inclusion*** *We will maintain a high proportion of children and young people with EHCPs in mainstream settings within Lambeth, supported by strong attainment, attendance and preparation for adulthood outcomes.* ***Independent Special School Placements*** • *Reduce the proportion of children and young people with EHCPs educated in independent special school placements from 4% to below 2%.* ***Appropriate Use of EHCPs*** • *Continue to reduce applications for lower-banding EHCPs where needs can appropriately be met through strengthened*

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
		ordinarily available provision and inclusive mainstream practice. • *Ensure statutory assessment and EHCP processes remain focused on children and young people with the most complex levels of need.*
		Educational Outcomes Targets *Improve outcomes for children and young people receiving SEN Support so that performance exceeds that of statistical neighbours in the following areas:* • *Level 2 qualifications, including English and mathematics, by age 19.* • *Achievement of Level 3 qualifications by age 19.* ***Preparation for Adulthood*** • *Reduce the proportion of children and young people with EHCPs and those receiving SEN Support whose education destinations are not sustained post-16 and post-19.* • *Improve outcomes so that Lambeth performs above the national average in sustained education, employment and training measures.*
		Children, Young People and Family Experience Participation and Engagement *Measures will include:* • *satisfaction levels reported by children and young people;* • *the number of children and young people engaged through participation and co-production activities; and* • *family satisfaction measured through the Annual SEND Family Survey and wider*

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
		engagement forums.
		Workforce Measures ***Workforce Confidence and Capacity*** *Measures will include:* • *workforce confidence in understanding and responding to SEND;* • *participation in training and professional development; and* • *recruitment and retention data across the partnership workforce.*
		Experts at Hand (EaH) Offer – Delivery Model *The Experts at Hand (EaH) model will underpin delivery of the strategy by scaling effective practice, strengthening inclusion and addressing inconsistency across the system.* ***How the Vision Will Be Achieved*** ***Stronger Collaboration*** • *Joint planning and shared expertise across education, health and care services.* • *Greater alignment between locality services, schools and outreach teams.* ***Deployment of Expertise*** • *Area SENCos, outreach services and health specialists supporting mainstream settings through locality-based delivery models.* • *Earlier access to specialist advice and intervention.* ***Earlier and More Localised Support*** • *Earlier identification and intervention for emerging needs.* • *Reduced reliance on out-of-borough placements and ISS.*

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
		System Enablers ***Capital Investment*** • *Expansion of local specialist provision, including SEND Inclusion Units.* • *Investment in mainstream facilities to improve accessibility and inclusion.* ***Workforce Development*** • *Universal SEND training across the workforce.* • *Expanded outreach and Area SENCo capacity.* • *Embedding specialist roles and integrated working across education, health and care.* ***Data and Digital Development*** • *Strengthened use of The Hub and operational dashboards.* • *Improved multi-agency data sharing, forecasting and performance monitoring.*
		Scale and Improvement Priorities ***Scale Successful Practice*** • *Expand successful outreach services, Area SENCo support and locality-based specialist provision.* • *Increase access to evidence-informed inclusive practice across settings.* ***Improve System Consistency*** • *Strengthen data integration and multi-agency coordination.* • *Improve consistency in workforce practice and confidence.* • *Increase awareness and accessibility of available SEND support and pathways for schools and families.*

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
		Intended Outcome • *Needs met* ***earlier and locally*** • *Schools confident, supported, and working within a* ***strong, expert partnership system*** ***<u>IMPACT, OUTCOMES AND TRIANGULATION</u>*** ***Activities → Outputs → Outcomes (demonstrable progress against baselines):*** • ***Activities:*** *Experts at Hand (EaH), Inclusion Units expansion, workforce development, Gateway model* • ***Outputs:*** *100 local area % schools engaged, higher % of CYP supported, increased therapy capacity, live dashboards illustrating progress from baselines.* • ***Outcomes:*** *progress against baseline measures - earlier intervention, increased mainstream inclusion, improved attendance, reduced high-cost placements, improved family experience* ***Triangulation of Evidence (progress against baseline):*** • ***Quantitative****: performance dashboards, demand and outcomes data* • ***Qualitative:*** *parent/carer feedback, CYP voice, SENDIASS themes* • ***Operational****: school feedback, practitioner insight* *→ Ensures a single, shared understanding of impact* ***Decision Thresholds:*** • *Low engagement → targeted redesign* • *Capacity pressure → phased prioritisation* • *Limited impact → model adaptation or*

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
		commissioning change ***Review and Governance:*** *• Monthly operational review* *• Termly strategic review* *• Annual reset* *• Escalation triggered by performance variance, demand pressure, lived experience concerns* ***Expected Impact By 2030 (progress against baseline):*** *• Demonstrable change and tangible evidence of needs met earlier and locally* *• Consistent inclusive practice across settings* *• Moderated EHCP growth* *• Improved system sustainability and value for money* *• Positive and consistent family and CYP experience*

Delivery through the Experts at Hand locality model, expansion of SEND Inclusion Units and targeted workforce investment is explicitly aligned to increasing mainstream inclusion. These delivery components provide the operational capacity required for more children and young people with SEND to be successfully supported within mainstream settings, as reflected in the projected increase in EHCP pupils in mainstream provision and associated improvements in attendance, engagement and outcomes.

Consistency Across Narrative, Data and Supporting Documentation

The Lambeth SEND Reform Plan Blueprint set out in the table above and the framework of activity provided in the remainder of this plan, has been developed as a fully integrated and coherent programme, with a clear and consistent line of sight between strategic ambition, delivery activity, performance measurement and resource allocation. The programme plan is designed to ensure that all core components—including the narrative, roadmap, Year 1 delivery plan, Data Template, SEND Maturity Assessment, financial assumptions and supporting annexes—are aligned and mutually reinforcing, providing a single, consistent framework for delivery and accountability.

Delivery priorities are explicitly linked to measurable outcomes, with performance indicators within the Data Template directly reflecting the ambitions set out within the reform programme. Measures relating to inclusion, attendance, demand, placement patterns and outcomes are consistently referenced across the roadmap and delivery plans, ensuring that progress can be clearly tracked and evidenced over time. This alignment enables a robust approach to monitoring and evaluation, with data providing a clear basis for assessing impact and informing continuous improvement.

The SEND Maturity Assessment was co-produced and has directly informed the design of the reform programme, ensuring that areas identified for development—such as early intervention, consistency of inclusive practice and system integration—are addressed through targeted delivery activity. Key components of the plan, including the Experts at Hand model, workforce development, sufficiency planning and strengthened governance arrangements, respond directly to identified system priorities. This ensures that reform activity is not only strategically aligned but focused on areas where it will have the greatest impact on outcomes for children and young people.

Financial planning and investment decisions are fully aligned to delivery priorities, with resources directed towards workforce expansion, development of local provision and system infrastructure. This ensures that investment is targeted towards interventions that increase mainstream inclusion, enable earlier intervention and reduce reliance on high-cost specialist provision. By linking financial assumptions to sufficiency modelling and delivery planning, the system is able to demonstrate both improved outcomes and long-term financial sustainability.

Supporting sections, including the Experts at Hand model, Enablers (Workforce, Capital and Data Systems) and Governance frameworks, provide detailed articulation of the delivery architecture underpinning the reform programme. These annexes are directly aligned to and referenced throughout the plan, ensuring that strategic intent, operational delivery and system enablers are presented as a single, connected model. Together, they demonstrate how capacity, resource, infrastructure and oversight are coordinated to support implementation and sustain improvement.

This integrated approach ensures that the Lambeth SEND Reform Plan programme operates as a coherent system, where strategy, delivery, data and investment are consistently aligned. It provides confidence that Lambeth's SEND Reform Plan is not a collection of discrete actions, but a disciplined and evidence-informed programme of system reform, capable of delivering sustained improvements in outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Supporting operational information to complement the work of the Local SEND Reform Plan framework of activity is set out in the 2026 Lambeth SEND Self Evaluation Framework (attached) which provides current baseline starting point positions with regards to the local area SEND system 'as is' and the Data template (attached).

3. **What is the local area partnership's strategy for delivering on the above?**

   A brief summary of your local system's theory of change or reform strategy. Reflect on the output of your **Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool**, particularly your *Local System 'change story.'*

Lambeth's theory of change is based on the principle that children and young people with SEND achieve the best outcomes when support is delivered early, locally and collaboratively through a high-quality inclusive mainstream system. Our reform plan builds on strong existing partnership arrangements across education, health and social care and responds directly to the findings of our Partnership maturity assessment and local system "change story."

The SEND reform Plan assessment process identified strengths in governance, co-production and multi-agency collaboration, alongside areas requiring further development, including consistency of inclusive practice, earlier intervention, workforce confidence and improved family experience. In response, the reform programme prioritises strengthening inclusive mainstream provision through the Experts at Hand (EaH) locality model, expansion of specialist support within mainstream settings, and improved multi-agency delivery. A central component of the EaH model is strengthening workforce capability across the system. Through structured CPD, in-school modelling and multidisciplinary collaboration, specialist expertise is used to build confidence and capacity within the wider workforce, ensuring that inclusive practice is embedded and sustained beyond individual interventions.

This approach is informed by local performance analysis and system evidence, which demonstrates that where early, coordinated multi-agency support is available, there is improved timeliness of intervention, stronger mainstream outcomes and reduced escalation to crisis points. It is further supported by national evidence that effective local systems deploy specialist expertise earlier and closer to children and young people, strengthening graduated response arrangements and improving experience and outcomes.

Through seven locality clusters aligned to Family Hubs and Integrated Neighbourhood Plans, schools and services will work collaboratively to identify need earlier, strengthen graduated responses and improve the coordination and timeliness of support. Over the

three-year period, Lambeth will transition from a reactive, specialist-led model to a proactive, inclusive system, where a greater proportion of children and young people have their needs met effectively at SEN Support in preparation for the possible introduction of Targeted and Target Plus Support as outlined in the School's White Paper 2026.

Lambeth recognises that demand for statutory processes will continue to be shaped by population growth and increasing complexity of need, particularly in SEMH and speech, language and communication needs. The aim of reform is therefore not to reduce demand in absolute terms, but to moderate the rate of EHCP growth relative to historic trends, improve the appropriateness of pathways, and ensure that statutory intervention is increasingly focused on children and young people with the most complex needs. Local modelling and benchmarking support this position, indicating modest overall growth with changing demand patterns across phases and need types.

Investment in inclusion and outreach services—including educational psychology, therapies and specialist advisory support—will strengthen the ability of mainstream settings to respond earlier and more effectively. This will increase access to support without reliance on statutory processes, improve workforce capability and reduce avoidable escalation, while maintaining appropriate access to EHCPs for those who require them.

The strategy is underpinned by clear delivery assumptions, including workforce capacity, system alignment and the ability of mainstream settings to embed inclusive practice at scale. It also recognises that demand patterns will continue to evolve, requiring ongoing system adaptation and responsive planning. Performance will be monitored through an integrated framework combining demand, inclusion, outcomes and lived experience, enabling evidence-based decision-making and adjustment over time.

As delivery progresses, the system will see improved access to timely support, increased confidence among schools and families, and greater consistency in inclusive practice across settings. Outcomes will be evidenced through improved inclusion, earlier intervention and stronger experiences for children and families, rather than reductions in demand alone.

Over time, these changes are expected to slow the trajectory of EHCP growth, improve placement mix and reduce reliance on high-cost specialist provision relative to need and historic trends. Financial sustainability will be achieved through strengthened inclusion, earlier intervention and more effective deployment of resources, rather than reliance on reductions in demand. Through this approach, Lambeth will deliver a SEND system that is more inclusive, more consistent and more sustainable, ensuring children and young people receive the right support, at the right time, in the right place.

4. **Please upload a completed copy of the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool. (Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool is included with attachments)**

Lambeth SEND Partnership Maturity Assessment – Overview:

Lambeth's SEND Local Area Partnership demonstrates a progressing and increasingly mature system, characterised by strong strategic intent, improving partnership working, and a clear commitment to delivering better experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The maturity assessment that was co-produced with schools and our Lambeth Parents Forum highlights a system that is self-aware and evidence-driven, with a balanced recognition of both strengths and areas requiring acceleration.

Key strengths include well-established governance structures, strong co-production with families and partners, and a growing culture of collaboration across education, health, and social care. The partnership has made tangible progress in strengthening inclusive mainstream provision, supported by an effective outreach model, expanded local provision, and positive indicators such as low exclusion rates and successful reintegration pathways. There is also increasing alignment in commissioning and a developing shared understanding of need, supported by improved data and joint planning.

However, the assessment identifies that variation in practice and lived experience remains a critical challenge, with inconsistencies in inclusive practice, timeliness of support, and workforce confidence across the system. Pressures in NDT pathways, therapy access, and workforce capacity continue to impact delivery, and the system is not yet consistently operating as a fully integrated model at scale.

The partnership is therefore moving with purpose towards a more integrated, locality-based model, underpinned by the Experts at Hand approach, which will strengthen early intervention, reduce escalation, and build capacity within mainstream settings. Overall, Lambeth demonstrates strong foundations, credible plans, and increasing system grip, positioning it to deliver sustained improvement and greater consistency over the next phase of reform. The assessment tool is available as an attachment.

5. **What is the local area partnership roadmap for the next 3 years?**

Lambeth SEND Local Area Partnership – 3-Year Focus

Over the next three years, Lambeth will deliver a fully integrated, inclusive SEND system aligned with the national vision set out in the Schools White Paper, in which children and young people receive timely, high-quality support within their local community, without unnecessary escalation to statutory processes. Building on a strong foundation of partnership working, improving governance, and expanding inclusive provision, the system will move from variable practice to consistent, high-quality experiences across all settings.

At the heart of this transformation will be a fully embedded Experts at Hand (EaH) model, operating through locality-based clusters aligned to Family Hubs and integrated neighbourhoods. This model will provide earlier access to specialist expertise (education, health and care) directly into mainstream schools, early years settings and further education providers, building workforce capability and enabling needs to be identified and met at the earliest point. As a result, the system will reduce reliance on statutory assessment and specialist placements, supporting more children to thrive within mainstream provision. The EaH model provides additionality by increasing both the availability and consistency of specialist support across all settings. This reduces variation in access to expertise and ensures that all schools, regardless of context, are supported to meet a wide range of needs through earlier intervention and strengthened inclusive practice.

Collectively, this approach will contribute to improved outcomes across the system, including increased mainstream inclusion, improved attendance and engagement, reduced exclusions and reduced escalation to high-cost specialist provision, in line with the wider ambitions of the SEND Reform Plan. The EaH model therefore represents a scaling and strengthening of existing provision, aligned to demand, rather than a replacement of current services.

By 2029, Lambeth will demonstrate a system where inclusion is the norm, with confident, well-supported mainstream settings delivering high-quality adaptive practice, supported by strong outreach, integrated therapies, and aligned commissioning. Children, young people and families will experience a joined-up system, characterised by co-produced solutions, consistent communication, and clear routes to support. Through strengthened data, workforce development, and sustained capital investment, Lambeth will deliver a system that is financially sustainable, outcome-driven, and focused on improving long-term life chances, ensuring children and young people with SEND are visible, valued, and supported to succeed.

Across the three-year roadmap, delivery is explicitly outcomes-led, using the current measures as a baseline for assessing progress and impact against, criteria set out in the SEND Reform Plan data template which is attached with a consistent line of sight between activity, measurable outputs and the impact on children, young people and families. **In Year 1,** implementation of the locality-based Experts at Hand (EaH) model and associated workforce expansion is designed to deliver tangible early outputs, including increased access to specialist support and wider reach across schools. These outputs translate directly into early outcomes, including improved timeliness of support, increased resolution at SEN Support and greater confidence across mainstream settings. Progress is assessed through leading indicators such as engagement levels, referral patterns and waiting times, ensuring that early signs of impact are identified and acted upon.

In Year 2, the focus shifts to embedding and scaling impact across the system, with all activity aligned to clearly defined outcomes. Improvements are evidenced through increased mainstream inclusion, reduced escalation to statutory processes, improved attendance and greater consistency in inclusive practice. Critically, performance is not assessed through data alone but through a triangulated

evidence base that brings together quantitative indicators (including inclusion, attendance and demand trends), qualitative feedback from children, young people and families, and operational insight from schools and practitioners. This triangulation provides a robust and shared understanding of whether delivery is achieving its intended impact, and highlights variation or areas requiring further intervention.

By Year 3, the system is operating as a fully mature, outcomes-driven model, with a strong emphasis on sustained impact and continuous improvement. Success is demonstrated through moderated EHCP growth relative to historic trends, increased proportions of needs met locally and inclusively, improved attainment and preparation for adulthood outcomes, and stronger financial sustainability. Outcomes are assessed through both leading and longer-term indicators, including attendance, engagement, attainment and destinations. At this stage, triangulated evidence is used systematically to inform decision-making, ensuring that effective approaches are scaled, areas of limited impact are adapted or redesigned, and resources are aligned to what is demonstrably improving outcomes. Across all three years, triangulation of data, lived experience and delivery insight acts as a consistent thread, ensuring that the system remains responsive, evidence-led and focused on delivering meaningful and sustained improvements for children and young people with SEND. This is set out in further detail below.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Building blocks *Strengthening inclusion across education settings* *Access to specialist support and local placements* *System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production* *Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours*	**Experts at Hand (EaH) Delivery Model** The EaH delivery model in Lambeth will operate through seven locality-based clusters aligned to Best Start Family Hubs and Integrated Neighbourhood Plans. This locality approach enables schools and services to work collaboratively within their local context, strengthening relationships, sharing expertise and responding more effectively to community need.	Review and embed the EaH offer and expand AEP / EP and SALT offer within cluster delivery Establish 5 new SEND Inclusion Units for ASD and SLCN / SEMH in key parts of the borough including 2 new	Please see our forecasting tool in supporting documents. • ***Continued stable Rate of EHCP with a Modest EHCP cohort growth*** *–Our forecasting shows the continued impact would model shows the cohort growing*

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Delivery of the model will be led by the Local Authority through the Area SENCo Team and a newly established Assistant Educational Psychologist (AEP) Programme. Each cluster will be supported by: • an Area SENCo; • an allocated Assistant Educational Psychologist; • Educational Psychology oversight; • ICB-commissioned therapy support, including Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) and Occupational Therapies (OT); and • wider outreach and specialist inclusion services. Therapy delivery within the EaH model will form part of the core contract with Evelina London, commissioned through the NHS South East London Integrated Care Board (ICB) and monitored through regular contract management and integrated commissioning arrangements. Lambeth benefits from a mature and well-established partnership between education and health services, supported through integrated leadership arrangements. The Director of Integrated Children's Commissioning and Youth Services works across both the Local Authority and NHS South East London Integrated Care System (ICS), ensuring coordinated strategic oversight and delivery	SEND Inclusion Units in Secondary Schools. Co-develop, and regularly refresh, a partnership-wide universal offer agreement with schools, MATs, early years settings and post-16 providers which will be underpinned by up-to-date, needs-based data and signed off by the local authority, ICB, MAT and school representatives and Parent Carer Forum (PCF). Year 2 will focus on embedding, scaling and quality assuring the Experts at Hand (EaH) model and wider SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy. Building on Year 1 implementation, the priority will shift from establishment to consistency, impact and measurable outcomes across the partnership.	*from 3,350 as at the January 2026, to 3,583 by January 2030 with a continued 2% rate of increase to reflect complex SEND needs.* • ***Increased support for forecasted growth in SEMH and SLCN*** *– Continued focus on supporting key primary needs of SEMH, Autism and SLCN to access mainstream or SEND Inclusion Unit.* • ***Increased EHCP growth in mainstream*** *– We are forecasting a 13% growth over the next four years in the numbers of pupils with an EHCP in mainstream schools including SEND Inclusion Units and will continue to expand places.*
	The SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy (2025–2030), launched in 2025, was developed through extensive co-production activity involving:	**Priority 1: Embed the Locality Cluster Model Key Actions**	Year 3 will focus on sustaining, evaluating and optimising to ensure long-term inclusion, improved

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	• over 60 children and young people from mainstream and special schools across all age groups; • more than 50 families through in-person engagement events, including the Lambeth Parent Forum; and • over 100 staff from the Local Authority, NHS and educational settings. To inform the EaH delivery model, a multi-agency working group was established, including: • Therapy Leads; • the Principal Educational Psychologist; and • school representatives. In addition, a multi-agency workshop hosted by a secondary school with an SEMH SEND Inclusion Unit supported: • completion of the SEND Maturity Matrix Assessment Tool; • identification of areas for development within the EaH model; • sufficiency and place planning discussions; and • strengthening partnership working and inclusive practice. A competitive bidding process was also established to support schools wishing to develop new SEND Inclusion Units. Applications were reviewed through a multi-agency weighted assessment process to ensure decisions were informed by local need, sufficiency planning and geographical demand. Strategic planning has been informed through:	• Fully embed the seven locality-based clusters as the core operating model for SEND inclusion support. • Evaluate the effectiveness and consistency of cluster delivery across all localities. • Refine cluster governance arrangements, accountability measures and performance reporting. • Strengthen peer-to-peer collaboration between schools through locality networks and shared practice forums. • Develop cluster-based inclusion improvement plans informed by Year 1 needs analysis and outcome data. **Intended Outcomes** • Greater consistency in inclusive practice across schools. • Improved access to specialist support regardless of school	outcomes and financial sustainability. By this stage, the Experts at Hand (EaH) model and locality-based delivery approach will be fully embedded, with a stronger focus on impact, system maturity and continuous improvement. The emphasis in Year 3 will move from implementation and embedding towards: • demonstrating measurable impact; • refining provision based on outcomes and data; • strengthening long-term sustainability; and • ensuring inclusion is consistently embedded across all settings and services. **Priority 1: Embed a Sustainable Inclusive Education System** **Key Actions** • Evaluate the long-term impact of the locality cluster model and EaH delivery approach.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	• existing SEND dashboards and forecasting tools commissioned through MIME; • additional analytical dashboards commissioned through 1st Planner and MIME; and • needs-led forecasting and sufficiency analysis. **Governance and Accountability** Transformation and implementation of the EaH model and wider SEND Sufficiency Programme will be governed through the existing SEND and Alternative Provision Operational Board, reporting into the SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board. The Strategic Partnership Board is chaired by the Director of Children's Services and includes representation from: • education; • health; • social care; • schools and settings; • Parent Carer Forum representatives; and • wider partnership stakeholders. Governance arrangements are well established and will provide strategic oversight, accountability and quality assurance throughout implementation. **Cluster Delivery Model and Gateway Development** EaH funding will strengthen support available to schools through:	capacity or engagement level. • Increased school confidence in meeting SEND needs earlier. **Priority 2: Strengthen Mainstream Inclusion and Reduce Escalation** **Key Actions** • Expand outreach and in-school coaching support across all clusters. • Extend implementation of WellComm and targeted communication interventions across additional primary settings. • Strengthen graduated response approaches through targeted support and quality assurance activity. • Increase opportunities for mainstream schools to access multidisciplinary consultation before escalation to statutory processes.	• Embed inclusion as a core accountability measure within school improvement, commissioning and governance frameworks. • Strengthen inclusive practice expectations across all educational settings, including post-16 and Alternative Provision. • Establish a borough-wide inclusion charter and shared standards framework. • Review and refine escalation pathways to ensure early intervention remains effective and proportionate. **Intended Outcomes** • Inclusion embedded consistently across all phases and settings. • Reduced variation in practice and outcomes between schools. • Stronger accountability for inclusion across the partnership.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	• the locality-based cluster delivery model; and • expansion of the existing Gateway Portal into a single point of referral for SEND support. The enhanced Gateway Portal will streamline access to: • Area SENCo support; • outreach services; • Autism Advisory support; • SEMH services; • the Three Tier Alternative Provision Approach; and • future integration with school nursing and Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs). The locality cluster model was identified by the multi-agency working group as the most effective approach for addressing disproportionality in access to specialist support and ensuring equitable access across all schools, rather than support being disproportionately accessed by the most proactive settings.	• Expand SEMH SEND Inclusion Units for Tier 2 support and review additional outreach to be commisioned SEND Inclusion Units for pupils at risk of exclusion or placement breakdown. **Intended Outcomes** • Increased proportion of pupils with EHCPs successfully supported in mainstream settings. • Reduction in exclusions, placement breakdown and escalation to specialist provision. • Improved attendance and engagement for children and young people with SEND.	**Priority 2: Optimise SEND Sufficiency and Local Provision** **Key Actions** • Review the impact and utilisation of SEND Inclusion Units and specialist pathways. • Align future sufficiency planning with updated forecasting, demographic trends and emerging needs analysis. • Continue targeted expansion of local specialist provision where gaps remain. • Strengthen transition pathways between mainstream, Inclusion Units, specialist provision and post-16 settings. • Further reduce dependency on independent specialist placements through improved local capacity. **Intended Outcomes** • Greater local sufficiency and
	Core Components of the EaH Offer The EaH model will strengthen inclusive mainstream practice through locality-based delivery and coordinated multi-agency support. Each cluster will be led by an expanded Area SENCo Team, responsible for: • coordinating annual needs analysis; • leading strategic inclusion planning; • supporting pooled funding accountability; and	**Priority 3: Develop the SEND Inclusion Unit and Sufficiency Programme** **Key Actions** • Review impact and outcomes of newly established SEND Inclusion Units.	

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	• linking schools with Educational Psychologists and Assistant Educational Psychologists. A new AEP Programme will be established, with one AEP allocated to each cluster and strategic oversight provided by a newly established Educational Psychologist leadership role across all seven clusters. Alongside the Area SENCo and AEP structure, the EaH therapies offer will provide: • planning meetings with individual schools to identify priority areas for support; • two parent sessions per school annually; and • a cluster-wide CPD programme. **Key Actions within the EaH Offer** **Assistant Educational Psychologist Programme** • Establish a new AEP Programme supported by Educational Psychologists. • Deliver cluster-based CPD and school-level implementation support. • Link AEPs and EPs to geographical clusters. **Annual Needs Analysis** • Introduce annual school and cluster-level needs analysis processes to identify priorities and target support effectively. **Cluster CPD Programme** Deliver practical and evidence-informed training including: • restorative practice; • emotion coaching; • cognition and learning;	• Expand SEND Inclusion Unit capacity with a secondary Autsim SEND Inclusion Unit in the South of the Borough, additional SEMH SEND Inclusion Units in primary and an SEMH SEND Inclusion Unit at Secondary for EBSNA or CYP struggling with transition. • Further develop assessment placements within Inclusion Units to reduce reliance on Alternative Provision. • Strengthen transition planning between mainstream, Inclusion Units and specialist settings. • Continue reducing reliance on independent special school placements through local provision development of SEND Inclusion Units and expansion of Elmcourt Special School	stability within the SEND system. • Improved placement sustainability and reduced placement breakdown. • Better preparation for adulthood pathways for young people with SEND. **Priority 3: Improve Outcomes for Children and Young People** **Key Actions** • Implement targeted interventions for attendance, attainment and preparation for adulthood outcomes including NEET co-ordinators, LA Based Independent Travel Training Team and Improved Inclusive Practice in FE settings. • Strengthen support for vulnerable cohorts, including children and young people with SEMH needs, EBSNA

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	• literacy development; and • Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) prevention. **In-School Modelling and Coaching** • Provide in-school coaching and implementation support led by Area SENCos and AEPs. • Embed learning from CPD directly into classroom and whole-school practice. **SENCo Peer Supervision** • Establish structured SENCo peer supervision sessions to support wellbeing, professional development and collaborative problem-solving. **Inclusion Unit Reviews** • Implement annual reviews of SEND Inclusion Units to ensure quality, impact and sustainability. **Multi-Disciplinary Consultation** • Deliver coordinated consultation involving EPs, SALT and Area SENCos through the Gateway Portal. • Strengthen reintegration pathways and quality assurance. **Inclusion Strategy Support** • Provide practical implementation support for school inclusion strategies, ensuring accountability beyond policy documentation. **Governor Support** Provide dedicated support for SEND Governors and Governing Boards through: • termly cluster-based governor briefings;	**Intended Outcomes** • Improved local sufficiency across priority areas of need. • Increased capacity within Lambeth to meet needs locally. • Reduction in use and cost of independent specialist placements and SEND transport expenditure **Priority 4: Strengthen SEMH and Inclusion Support** **Key Actions** • Embed the SEMH mentoring and counselling model across localities. • Expand Family Support Mentor and SEMH Pupil Mentor capacity. • Develop a borough-wide relational practice framework. • Strengthen Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) pathways and early intervention support.	and those at risk of exclusion. • Expand pathways into employment, apprenticeships and supported internships. • Develop stronger transition planning from Year 9 onwards. • Embed pupil voice and co-production within individual planning and service design. **Intended Outcomes** • Reduction in persistent and severe absence for pupils with SEND. • Improved attainment and qualification outcomes. • Increased sustained destinations in education, employment and training. • Improved wellbeing and participation for children and young people with SEND through survey feedback and SEND Youth Council.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	• guidance on accountability for inclusion outcomes; • SEND data interpretation support; and • support to strengthen strategic challenge regarding SEND provision. **Parent and Family Support** • Deliver locality-based parent support through coffee mornings, consultation sessions and drop-in opportunities. • Provide two therapy-led parent sessions per school annually.	• Introduce cluster-based attendance reviews for pupils with SEND and SEMH needs. **Intended Outcomes** • Improved attendance and reduced persistent absence for pupils with SEND. • Reduced need for reactive SEMH intervention. • Greater consistency in relational and trauma-informed practice across schools.	**Priority 4: Strengthen Workforce Sustainability and Leadership** **Key Actions** • Evaluate workforce development impact across education, health and care services. • Develop long-term recruitment and retention strategies for key SEND professions, including Educational Psychologists and newly established AEP's, therapists and specialist practitioners. • Expand leadership pathways for inclusion leaders, SENCos and specialist staff. • Embed coaching, supervision and peer support models across clusters. • Strengthen succession planning and leadership capacity across SEND services. **Intended Outcomes**
	Expanding SEND Inclusion Provision Lambeth will continue to increase specialist provision within mainstream settings through the expansion of SEND Inclusion Units. This includes: • opening a new SEMH SEND Inclusion Unit at Henri Fawcett Primary School; • offering placements for children and young people from Lilian Baylis Technology School; and • establishing assessment placements within existing SEND Inclusion Units to reduce over-reliance on Alternative Provision for children and young people with EHCPs.	**Priority 5: Workforce Development and System Leadership** **Key Actions** • Deliver a second phase of universal SEND workforce development across education, health and social care.	
	Strengthening the SEMH Offer Demand relating to SEMH need in Lambeth has increased significantly in both volume and complexity. Schools are responding to increased levels of: • behavioural need;	• Expand leadership development opportunities for SENCos and inclusion leaders.	

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	• attendance concerns; • mental health difficulties; and • changing statutory expectations. The SEMH offer will increasingly focus on prevention, capacity building and system leadership rather than reactive intervention once needs have escalated. This will include: • Family Support Mentors; • SEMH Pupil Mentors focused on reintegration and transition; • mentoring and counselling provision; • Primary and Secondary SEMH Advisors; and • strengthened whole-school approaches to SEMH support.	• Establish accredited training pathways linked to inclusive practice and SEND leadership. • Continue development of the Assistant Educational Psychologist Programme. • Strengthen governor training and accountability for SEND and inclusion outcomes. **Intended Outcomes** • Increased workforce confidence and consistency. • Improved recruitment and retention across specialist SEND services. • Stronger leadership accountability for inclusion outcomes.	• Greater workforce stability and resilience. • Increased confidence and expertise across the partnership workforce. • Improved recruitment and retention within specialist services. **Priority 5: Deepen Integration Across Education, Health and Care** **Key Actions** • Further integrate education, health and social care pathways through shared planning and commissioning. • Develop more aligned commissioning approaches between the Local Authority and ICB. • Review effectiveness of multidisciplinary consultation and integrated delivery arrangements. • Expand integrated data-sharing and joint performance reporting.
	School Improvement and Quality Assurance A new School Improvement Advisor role with a SEND specialism will be established to work alongside existing School Improvement Advisors. This role will: • strengthen consistency of inclusive practice across schools; • support quality assurance; • promote effective graduated responses; and • embed SEND within wider school improvement frameworks.	**Priority 6: Partnership Integration and Family Experience** **Key Actions** • Strengthen integration between education, health and social care	
	One-Year Delivery Plan (Year 1) **Governance and Infrastructure**		

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	• Establish SEND Reform Plan governance through existing SEND and AP Operational Board Strategic Partnership Board. • Finalise operational delivery model and cluster arrangements. • Expand the Gateway Portal into a single point of referral for SEND support services. **Workforce Expansion** • Recruit and deploy Assistant Educational Psychologists across all seven clusters. • Expand the Area SENCo Team. • Expand the Autism Advisory Team. • Recruit a Literacy Specialist Teacher to support cluster delivery. • Establish the SEND-specialist School Improvement Advisor role. **Cluster Delivery Implementation** • Launch locality-based cluster model across all seven areas. • Complete annual needs analysis for all clusters. • Deliver the first cycle of cluster CPD and in-school coaching. **Therapies and Multi-Agency Support** • Integrate therapies provision into the EaH cluster model. • Deliver multidisciplinary consultations through the Gateway Portal. • Begin delivery of parent workshops and school-based therapy sessions. • Establish WellComm SLCN assessment tool and Intervention.	through shared planning and joint delivery pathways. • Further develop the Gateway Portal to include additional integrated services and self-service functionality. • Expand co-production opportunities with children, young people and families. • Introduce a “You Said, We Did” reporting framework linked to annual engagement activity. • Increase engagement with underrepresented communities and groups. **Intended Outcomes** • Improved family confidence and experience of the SEND system. • More coordinated multi-agency working. • Increased participation and influence from children, young people and families.	• Strengthen strategic alignment between SEND, inclusion, mental health and early help priorities. **Intended Outcomes** • More seamless support for children, young people and families. • Reduced duplication and improved efficiency across services. • Stronger partnership accountability and shared ownership of outcomes. **Priority 6: Enhance Family Experience and Co-production** **Key Actions** • Evaluate the impact of participation and co-production activity across the partnership. • Strengthen engagement with underrepresented communities and groups.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Inclusion and Sufficiency • Open the SEMH SEND Inclusion Unit at Henri Fawcett Primary School and Lilian Baylis Secondary School. • Develop assessment placements within existing Inclusion Units. • Review SEND Inclusion Unit capacity and future sufficiency requirements. • Introduction of LA based Independent Travel Training to reduce SEND Transport expenditure. **SEMH and Early Intervention** • Introduce SEMH mentoring and counselling support. • Expand the SEMH and Behaviour capacity. • Establish Family Support Mentor capacity for Secondary aged school support. • Develop locality-based approaches to EBSNA prevention and reintegration. **Data and Quality Assurance** • Implement enhanced SEND dashboards and forecasting tools. • Expand baseline performance measures for attendance, inclusion and placement outcomes. • Develop monitoring arrangements for impact and value for money. **Activities → Outputs → Outcomes (progress against baseline)**	**Priority 7: Data, Quality Assurance and Impact Measurement** **Key Actions** • Embed a multi-agency SEND performance dashboard across governance structures. • Introduce cluster-level scorecards and outcome monitoring. • Use forecasting and trend analysis to inform commissioning and sufficiency planning. • Develop quality assurance processes for inclusive practice and graduated response implementation. • Monitor impact against agreed SEND and AP Strategy metrics. **Intended Outcomes** • Improved strategic oversight and accountability. • Better use of data to inform commissioning and service delivery.	• Embed "You Said, We Did" reporting within all major service developments. • Develop co-production standards and quality assurance processes. • Increase opportunities for children, young people and families to influence strategic commissioning and service design. **Intended Outcomes** • Improved trust and confidence from families. • Increased evidence of meaningful co-production. • Greater representation and inclusion within engagement activity. **Priority 7: Deliver Financial Sustainability and Value for Money** **Key Actions** • Review financial impact of the EaH model and SEND Sufficiency Programme.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	• (EaH delivery, workforce, Gateway → schools engaged, CYP supported → earlier intervention, reduced escalation). • Monthly operational and termly strategic review with escalation triggers. Impact validated through data, lived experience and operational insight. • Evidence will determine scaling, adaptation or redesign of delivery.	• Clear evidence of impact and improved outcomes for children and young people. **All activity linked to measurable outcomes and consistency across clusters** • Delivery measured through inclusion, reduced escalation, improved attendance. • Integrated performance framework combining quantitative, qualitative and delivery evidence. • Regular review cycles with governance escalation and adaptive commissioning.	• Continue reducing reliance on high-cost independent specialist placements. • Evaluate impact of earlier intervention and strengthened mainstream inclusion on demand reduction. • Improve SEND transport efficiency and independence pathways with internal Independent Travel training team. • Continue to use forecasting and predictive modelling to support long-term commissioning decisions. **Intended Outcomes** • Improved financial sustainability within the High Needs Block with reduction in lower banding EHCNA's and increased focused understanding on EHCP's supporting the most complex SEND CYP.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
			• Better value for money across SEND services and provision. • More efficient use of specialist resources and placements. **Priority 8: Quality Assurance, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement** **Key Actions** • Undertake a full multi-agency evaluation of the SEND Reform Plan • Embed continuous quality assurance across clusters and services. • Introduce peer review and sector-led improvement approaches. • Benchmark performance against statistical neighbours and national outcomes. • Refresh strategic priorities and delivery plans based on evaluation findings. **Intended Outcomes**

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
			• Clear evidence of system-wide impact and improvement. • Improved strategic oversight and accountability. • Strong foundations for the next phase of SEND Reforms.
			Year 3 Success Measures By the end of Year 3, Lambeth will aim to demonstrate: • Inclusion consistently embedded across all settings and phases. • Increased attainment, attendance and preparation for adulthood outcomes for children and young people with SEND. • Reduced reliance on independent specialist provision and out-of-borough placements and reduction in spend on ISS. • Sustained growth in mainstream inclusion for pupils with EHCPs. • Improved family satisfaction and

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
			confidence in the SEND system monitored through the SEND Families Survey. • Greater workforce stability and confidence. • Strong evidence of effective co-production and partnership working. **IMPACT MEASURES (progress against baseline)** • Evidence includes inclusion rates, sufficiency, attainment and destinations. • Decisions informed by combined data, experience and delivery intelligence. • Scale, adapt or discontinue provision based on evidence and value for money.
Success measures ***Drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template***	By the end of Year 1, Lambeth will aim to: • Increase in spaces in SEND units in Mainstream including Early Years by 15% by September 2027	By the end of Year 2, Lambeth will aim to: • Increased numbers of children and young people with EHCPs	By the end of Year 3, Lambeth will aim to: • Increase in children and young people

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	• Ensure rate of EHCP increase is not above 2% • Reduce spend on ISS places by 10% • Reduce the number of children with SEND not in education by 15% by the end of calendar year 2027. • Increase children and young people supported by EP and AEP by over 300% from 2025. • Reduce CYP with SEMH as primary need in ISS with expansion of SEND Inclusion Units • Reduce CYP with Autism as a primary need in ISS with expansion of SEND Inclusion Units • Improve overall effectiveness of SEND Inclusion Units	successfully supported in mainstream settings. • Reduction in persistent absence and suspensions for pupils with SEND. • Improved family satisfaction and co-production feedback. • Reduced reliance on independent specialist provision. • Improved consistency in inclusive practice across schools. • Increased workforce confidence in meeting SEND needs. • Evidence of stronger multi-agency integration and earlier intervention. • Positive impact from the locality cluster model and Experts at Hand delivery approach.	supported by EP and AEP • Retention of rate of increase in EHCP's to not exceed 2% • Continued reduction in lower banding EHCP and skew for higher banding EHCP for more complex CYP • Decrease in number of EHCP's placed in AP by 20% • Reduction in Independent Special School places by 5% • Significant reduction in Independent Special School places for SEMH CYP by 40%

6. **What will the local area partnership deliver in the first year?**

Lambeth SEND Partnership – Year 1 Delivery focus (2026–27)

Across Year 1, delivery is structured to ensure a clear and consistent link between implementation activity, operational outputs and measurable outcomes, with each workstream contributing to improved inclusion and earlier intervention for children and young people with SEND.

Within Workstream 1 (Cluster Delivery Model and Experts at Hand), implementation of locality-based clusters, workforce expansion and Gateway development is expected to increase school engagement, improve access to multidisciplinary support and reduce variation in provision across settings. These outputs will drive outcomes including earlier identification of need, increased resolution at SEN Support, improved attendance and reduced placement instability. Impact will be assessed through triangulated evidence, including engagement data across clusters, referral patterns through the Gateway, and qualitative feedback from schools, families and young people, enabling continuous refinement of delivery where variation or underperformance is identified.

Within Workstream 2 (Expansion of SEND Inclusion Units and Local Provision), delivery is focused on increasing local capacity through new and enhanced SEND Inclusion Units and improved pathways into mainstream-supported provision. Outputs include increased availability of local placements, establishment of assessment pathways and reduced dependency on independent provision. These outputs are expected to result in measurable outcomes including increased proportions of children and young people educated within mainstream and local provision, reduced reliance on high-cost placements, and improved placement stability and parental confidence. Impact will be monitored through placement data, sufficiency tracking and financial indicators, alongside family feedback and operational insight from placement panels, ensuring that investment is demonstrably improving local inclusion and system sustainability.

Within Workstream 3 (SEMH and Early Intervention), expansion of outreach, mentoring, Gateway access and preventative SEMH support is designed to increase early intervention and reduce escalation of need. Outputs include increased engagement with Lambeth's Three Tier Approach, greater access to SEMH support and wider delivery of preventative interventions. These outputs will drive outcomes including reduced persistent absence and suspensions, increased Tier 1 early intervention activity and reduced escalation to specialist and alternative provision. Impact will be triangulated through attendance and behaviour data, referral patterns across tiers and qualitative feedback from schools and families, enabling the system to respond rapidly where early intervention is not yet reducing downstream demand.

Across all three workstreams, progress will be assessed through a shared triangulated evidence base, combining quantitative data (attendance, exclusions, EHCP demand, placement trends), lived experience (family and CYP feedback) and operational intelligence from schools, practitioners and multi-agency panels. This supports a consistent and transparent understanding of impact across the system and enables identification of variation between workstreams, cohorts and localities. Delivery is underpinned by clear governance and review arrangements, including monthly operational monitoring and termly strategic oversight, with defined escalation routes and success thresholds. These thresholds—such as improvements in mainstream inclusion, reductions in escalation to statutory processes and improved attendance—inform decisions to scale effective approaches, target additional support or adapt delivery models where impact is limited. **Through this approach, Year 1** establishes a strong foundation for an outcomes-led, evidence-driven system that continually refines delivery based on what is demonstrably improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND. This is set out further in the delivery plan below.

2026-27 Local delivery plan		**Q2**		**Q3**		**Q4**	
Workstream outline – mapped to building block ***Outcome -*** *what you want to achieve with this workstream*	***Responsible lead per workstream*** *– accountable for the delivery of the*	***Milestones per workstream*** *What key milestones will*	***Target trajectory per workstream***	***Milestones per workstream*** *What key milestones will*	***Target trajectory per workstream***	***Milestones per workstream*** *What key milestones will*	***Target trajectory per workstream*** *Where do you expect your data to be?*

2026-27 Local delivery plan		Q2		Q3		Q4	
Success measures – *how you measure progress drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template*	*workstream and the identified outcome.*	*enable you achieve your targeted trajectory*	*Where do you expect your data to be?*	*enable you achieve your targeted trajectory*	*Where do you expect your data to be?*	*enable you achieve your targeted trajectory*	
Workstream 1 **Cluster Delivery Model Implementation of EaH and Gateway Portal Expansion -** ***Increase Inclusive Practice across Mainstream Settings*** **<u>Building Blocks</u>** **Strengthening Inclusion across Education Settings** **System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production** **Encouraging Inclusive Culture and Behaviours** <u>*Success measure*</u> *–* • *Increase school satisfaction with SEND support offer to 80%* • *Increase family confidence in mainstream inclusion through annual SEND survey* • *Reduce emergency annual reviews* • *Reduce placement change requests* • *Increase in CYP with SEND placed in Mainstream and SEND Inclusion Units*	***Cluster Delivery Model Implementation*** *Senior Strategic Area SENCo and Principal EP*	☐ ***Recruit workforce*** ☐ ***Establish governance*** ☐ ***Launch clusters*** Recruit to new AEP programme Recruit of expanded SALT offer including WellComm Seven operational clusters established Deploy locality staffing model including integrating therapies into clusters Introduce WellComm assessment and intervention programme	Data remains stable whilst Cluster Delivery model established and annual school locality needs analysis completed	☐ **Deliver implementation** ☐ **Embed school engagement** ☐ **Begin quality assurance** Completed and reviewed annual school and locality needs analysis Engagement of 75% of maintained schools with SEND Clusters Engagement of 50% of Academies with SEND Clusters	Reduction in change of placement requests from mainstream Improvements in attendance and reduction in suspension Improvement in qualitative data - SENCo Survey, CYP Survey and Families Survey	☐ Evaluate impact ☐ Refine delivery ☐ Scale successful practice Monitor cluster engagement to reduce disproportionality in access to support Parent sessions delivered WellComm implemented in identified schools 80% of all schools engaged with SEND Cluster including Academies	***Increased placements in Mainstream for Year 7 and reception for normal admission process*** ***Continued decrease in change of placement requests and emergency annual review*** ***Continued reduction in EHCP's issued at lower banding to reflect EHCP's supporting more complex learners***

2026-27 Local delivery plan		Q2		Q3		Q4	
• *Decrease in ISS expenditure and placements* • *Rate of EHCNA to remain at 2% or lower*							
Workstream 2 ***Outcome* - Expansion of SEND Inclusion Units in mainstream settings** ***Building Block*** ***Access to Specialist Support and local placements*** ***Success measure* –** ***Increase SEND Inclusion Unit capacity*** ***Reduce Independent Special School placements from 4% to below 3.5% by Q4*** ***Reduce SEND transport spend growth t*** ***Reduce EHCP pupils placed in AP due to lack of SEMH Provision***	***SRO and School Organisation Lead***	Open SEMH SEND Inclusion Units at Henri Fawcett Primary School and Lilian Baylis Technology School to support North of the borough locality Confirm bids for new SEND Inclusion Units from High Needs Capital Provision Allocation Establish Cluster Leads to QA existing SEND Inclusion Units	Increase placement in SEND Inclusion Units with new provision opening	Establish assessment placements within existing Inclusion Units Introduce LA-based Independent Travel Training programme to support attendance at local placements	Continued Increase in placements in SEND Inclusion Units	Develop pathways to Assessment Places at SEND Inclusion Units to reduce Alternative Provision dependency Open new Autism SEND Inclusion Unit at Secondary School in South of Borough. Open new SEMH – Nurture Provision at Secondary School in South of the borough locality	Increase in Mainstream Placements for EHCP's Increase in capacity of SEND Inclusion Units Increase in parental preference schools with SEND Inclusion Units in key locations in borough to meet Autism and SEMH needs

2026-27 Local delivery plan		Q2		Q3		Q4	
Workstream 3 **<u>Outcome</u> – Expansion of SEMH and Early Intervention offer** **<u>Building block</u> -** Strengthening Inclusion across Education Settings System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours **<u>Success Measure</u>** • Reduction in persistent absence and severe absence in CYP with SEND Support or EHCP needs in mainstream settings • Reduction in specialist provision and AP placement for CYP with SEMH	***Senior Strategic SENCo and SEMH and Behaviour Team Lead***	Recruit and establish wider SEMH and behaviour outreach team Launch redesigned Gateway portal to ensure one point of to access support from outreach teams and refer to Three Tier Approach Delivery of Q1 and Q2 menu of CPD through Locality Cluster Model	Increased engagement of schools with Three Tier Approach Reduction in Tier 2 placements and increase in Tier 1 referrals for Early Intervention	Delivery of Q3 CPD menu through Locality Cluster Model Delivery of Mentoring to year 5 and year 6 in preparation for transition	Increased engagement of schools with Three Tier Approach Reduction in Tier 2 placements and increase in Tier 1 referrals for Early Intervention	Review of SEMH and Early Intervention Offer alongside suspension data and referrals	Decrease in suspensions for SEND Support cohort Increase in Tier 1 referrals Decrease in Tier 3 referrals and Managed Transfer requests to AP

2026-27 Local delivery plan	Q2	Q3	Q4
Projected Investment Spend per quarter			
Transformation Grant and Administration			
SEND Transformation Lead / Finance and Admin	77k	77k	77k
Expansion of Tech	8k	8k	8k
MIME data KPI tracking expansion	13k	12.5k	12.5k
Experts at Hand Grant			
Workforce expansion			
SEMH	83k	83k	83k
Outreach	109k	109k	109k
EPS /EBSNA /Cluster	184k	184k	184k
EY		13k	13k
Further Ed		4k	
Health		239k	239k
Contingency – planning	48k	48k	48k
Total	**£522k**	**£777.5k**	**£773.5k**
Capital Development – High Needs Provision Capital Allocation			

7. **How will the local area partnership deliver the first-year plan?**

Please set out how you will ensure the required capacity and capability is in place from organisational corporate functions to support implementation of the plan. This could include reference to how you plan to build or bring in project delivery capability to manage delivery against the plan, support prioritisation, and effective use of resources; and how you plan to build the capacity and capability in data and analytics to support effective tracking against the measures in the plan and reporting that informs decision making.

The local area partnership will deliver the first-year plan through a strong governance framework, integrated partnership leadership and targeted investment in workforce, programme management and data capability. Delivery will build on Lambeth's established collaborative arrangements across education, health and social care and the developing maturity of partnership working within the SEND Reform Plan and the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy 2025–2030.

Strategic oversight for delivery will sit within the SEND and AP Operational Board, reporting into the SEND and AP Strategic Partnership Board co- chaired by the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Integrated Services (across Health and LA), with Lambeth benefitting from an integrated system and service across the local area. The Strategic Partnership Board includes representation from education, health, social care, schools, Lambeth Parent Carer Forum and wider stakeholders. This structure will ensure clear accountability and shared ownership of delivery across all partners. Performance will be used to actively hold the system to account for improving outcomes, reducing variation and ensuring consistent delivery across all localities.

Clear ownership of delivery will be established at strategic, operational and locality levels, ensuring accountability is embedded across the system and aligned to the locality cluster model. Delivery will focus on reducing variation in access to support, experience and outcomes between settings and localities, ensuring a more equitable and consistent offer across the borough.

Governance and escalation

Performance will be reviewed through monthly operational reporting and quarterly partnership governance. Where delivery falls outside agreed thresholds or trajectories, this will trigger escalation through governance structures, including focused review, identification of underlying causes and agreement of corrective actions. This approach will enable proactive system management, ensuring that emerging pressures relating to demand, capacity or performance are identified early and addressed through targeted intervention, resource reallocation or adjustment of delivery approaches.

To support implementation, the partnership will strengthen programme management and delivery capacity through a dedicated SEND Reform Programme aligned to the Experts at Hand (EaH) delivery model and SEND Sufficiency Programme. This will include clearly defined workstreams, milestone tracking, risk management and regular performance reporting. Existing leadership capacity across SEND,

inclusion, Educational Psychology, commissioning and school improvement services will be aligned into this structure to support coordinated delivery, prioritisation and effective use of resources.

Delivery assurance and decision-making

Each workstream will include defined review points, measurable success thresholds and clear articulation of implementation activity, operational outputs and intended outcomes. Performance against these measures will inform decisions to scale, refine or redesign delivery approaches. Where pilots and new delivery models demonstrate positive impact, these will be scaled across localities; where impact is limited, delivery will be adapted in response to evidence and system feedback. Learning from Year 1 implementation will directly inform implementation and scaling in subsequent phases of the reform programme.

The local area will invest directly in workforce expansion and specialist capacity to ensure frontline delivery capability is in place. During Year 1 this includes:

- expansion of the Area SENCo Team;
- establishment of a new Assistant Educational Psychologist (AEP) Programme across seven locality clusters;
- expansion of Autism Advisory and SEMH outreach support;
- recruitment of a Literacy Specialist Teacher;
- creation of a SEND-specialist School Improvement Advisor role; and
- expansion of Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) commissioning.

This workforce model will deliver clear operational outputs, including increased access to multidisciplinary support, improved timeliness of intervention and strengthened capacity within mainstream settings to meet need earlier. As delivery becomes embedded, this will contribute

to increased numbers of children and young people being supported effectively at SEN Support, reducing escalation into statutory processes and specialist provision.

Delivery assumptions and capacity

Delivery is underpinned by key assumptions, including successful recruitment, retention and deployment of workforce across education, health and outreach services, alongside the effective integration of multidisciplinary delivery within locality clusters. These assumptions will be regularly reviewed through performance monitoring and workforce data to ensure delivery remains aligned to demand and system capacity.

Integrated commissioning arrangements between the Local Authority and NHS South East London Integrated Care System (ICS) will further support delivery. Lambeth benefits from a Director of Integrated Children's Commissioning and Youth Services working across both organisations, enabling coordinated strategic oversight and alignment of resources. Therapy support within the EaH model will be delivered through existing ICB-commissioned arrangements, ensuring services are integrated at the point of delivery and accessible to schools and families.

The partnership recognises the importance of strong corporate support functions in enabling delivery. Finance, procurement, HR, commissioning, digital and communications teams will support workforce mobilisation, contract management, sufficiency planning and stakeholder engagement.

Financial and demand alignment

Delivery will be continuously aligned with demand trends and financial trajectories, ensuring that reform activity translates into both improved outcomes and long-term sustainability. Investment in inclusion, early intervention and locality delivery will support a reduction in reliance on high-cost specialist provision over time, enabling a gradual shift in resource allocation towards earlier and more preventative support.

A key priority within Year 1 is strengthening data and analytical capability to support evidence-informed decision making and robust performance management. The partnership already utilises SEND dashboards and forecasting tools through MIME and 1st Planner to support sufficiency planning, forecasting and trend analysis.

During Year 1, enhanced dashboards and reporting arrangements will be implemented to monitor:

- attendance, inclusion and placement trends;
- EHCP cohort growth and banding profiles;
- use of Alternative Provision and independent placements;
- workforce activity and engagement;
- financial sustainability; and
- outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Data-driven delivery and system learning

Performance data will be actively used to inform operational and strategic decision-making, including identifying variation across localities, targeting support where needed and scaling effective practice where impact is demonstrated. This will enable real-time oversight of system performance and support earlier intervention where pressures emerge.

Baseline measures and performance trajectories will be established for all major reform priorities. Monitoring will be used to test and refine key assumptions relating to inclusion growth, workforce capacity and demand reduction, ensuring delivery remains aligned to forecast trajectories over time.

The partnership will strengthen quality assurance through annual needs analysis, locality cluster reviews, SEND Inclusion Unit reviews and multi-agency performance monitoring.

By the end of Year 1, key elements of the reform programme will be embedded within business-as-usual delivery across services and localities. Confidence in the SEND system will increase across schools, families and partners as access to support becomes more timely, consistent and effective.

Together, these arrangements provide a clear and robust delivery framework, combining strong governance, operational capacity and data-driven decision-making. This will ensure that Year 1 delivery results in measurable improvements in inclusion, reduced escalation, improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND, reduced costs and improved value for money, while supporting the transition to a sustainable and inclusive local system.

Alignment to DfE SEND Reform Plan Core Requirements: **The table in annex D** of this plan demonstrates how Lambeth's SEND Reform Plan aligns with DfE expectations for effective local SEND system reform, providing clear signposting to where each core requirement is addressed within the plan.

8. **Other funding Local Authorities**.

Block Transfers: If you have made a block transfer (Schools Block to High Needs Block) for 26-27, please set out how your plans for this funding align with the activities outlined above.

Lambeth made a one-off block transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2024–25 to support the Exceptional Needs Grant and associated SEND inclusion activity. This funding supported early intervention and strengthened schools' capacity to meet additional needs within mainstream settings.

However, no further block transfers have been made for 2026–27 or future years. Lambeth schools are currently experiencing significant

and sustained baseline financial pressures, including rising operational and staffing costs, which have materially reduced the affordability of transferring funding from the Schools Block within the Dedicated Schools Grant envelope.

As a result, the local authority does not currently plan to make an ongoing transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in future years. The SEND Reform Plan will therefore continue to focus on delivering system improvements and inclusion priorities through existing High Needs Block resources envelope.

Capital: We have announced at least £3 billion high needs capital between 2026-27 and 2029-30 to support children and young people (CYP) with SEND, or those requiring alternative provision (AP). This funding is intended to support place delivery across the full 0-25 age range, including early years and post-16. We expect funding to support the following outcomes:

a. Inclusion at the core of high needs sufficiency strategy, resulting in more children and young people with SEND accessing suitable places in mainstream settings, across all phases of education

b. Every child or young person who needs a place in an inclusion base can access one

c. Fewer children and young people with SEND needing to travel a long way to access a suitable placement

d. Improved suitability of the mainstream estate to support children and young people with SEND, with adaptations to improve inclusivity and accessibility of the physical environment

We also welcome innovative uses of high needs capital to drive inclusion, for example, investment in assistive technology for use in mainstream settings.

Please outline your strategy for how this funding will meet the outcomes above, with reference to the core minimum requirements and other workstreams in this reform plan where appropriate. We would like to see detail around your plans to increase capacity for inclusion bases (formerly known as SEN units, resourced provision and pupil support units – SU/RP/PSUs), such as schools, colleges or early years providers identified, engagement with relevant settings and trusts, and target cohort of needs.

If your plans include increases to places in special schools or specialist post-16 institutions, please include a clear rationale, showing the need that is being met, and why it cannot be met through other types of provision, such as inclusion bases.

If you are receiving additional capital funding to replace one or more planned special or AP free schools, please set out how this funding will meet need in your area, and plans for engaging relevant trusts in your sufficiency planning. ▫

Lambeth has a strong and established track record of delivering inclusive education through effective partnership with schools and settings across mainstream schools, Inclusion Units and specialist provision within Lambeth. This has created a system that already demonstrates comparatively low reliance on out-of-borough and independent placements. The next phase of reform will build on this foundation to strengthen consistency, improve outcomes, and increase confidence in local provision across the full continuum of need.

The strategic ambition is to ensure that more children and young people with SEND are educated successfully within their local communities, with mainstream settings, Inclusion Units and specialist provision operating as a coherent, high-quality and interdependent system. Local provision should not only be sufficient, but consistently the preferred choice for families, driven by quality, outcomes and trust in the inclusivity of the system. Aligned to the SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025–2030, this approach will deliver earlier intervention, improved access to support, improved attainment and a financially sustainable SEND system.

Success will be measured through increased mainstream inclusion, improved educational outcomes, reduced reliance on out-of-borough and independent provision, reduced costs and improved system flow across placements and transitions.

Estate, capital and sufficiency strategy

Delivering this ambition requires targeted and phased investment in the estate to ensure the right provision is available at the right time and in the right place. This will be underpinned by a clear capital and sufficiency strategy focused on expanding capacity, improving accessibility, and aligning provision more closely to local patterns of need.

Key priorities include:

- **Expanding Inclusion Unit capacity** across nursery, primary and secondary phases (including additional provision in maintained nursery schools and mainstream schools). Providing appropriate provisions close to home communities and reducing the need for some specialist places.
- **Increasing specialist provision** for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, including expanded and new provision where required. Providing in-borough provision, reducing the reliance on independent or out of borough placements.
- **Improving the accessibility,** adaptability and inclusivity of mainstream school environments through targeted capital investment and redesign. Providing inclusive environments by default, enabling more of our children and young people to be educated with their peers locally.

This programme will increase local capacity, reduce placement delays, strengthen transitions between settings, and improve the ability of mainstream schools to meet a wider range of needs earlier and more effectively.

Capital investment will be delivered through a phased three-year programme:

- **Year 1:** Expansion of priority Inclusion Units and establishment of new specialist capacity in areas of highest pressure, alongside initial mainstream adaptation works
- **Year 2:** Embedding and stabilising new provision, increasing utilisation across localities, and strengthening consistency of access and practice across settings

- **Year 3:** Optimisation of sufficiency, refinement of placement pathways, and system-wide efficiency improvements, ensuring provision is fully aligned to demand

This phased approach ensures that provision is not only created, but fully embedded, effectively utilised, and responsive to evolving need over time.

Data-led planning and estate optimisation

A robust, data-driven approach underpins the entire programme. Detailed analysis of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) need, geography, and current provision is being used to align estate capacity with demand and identify opportunities to expand, repurpose or optimise existing assets within available resources.

This includes mapping:

- EHCP cohorts by type and level of need
- Distribution of need across neighbourhoods and localities
- Travel patterns and proximity to home communities
- Current utilisation of mainstream, Inclusion Unit and specialist provision
- Opportunities arising from changes in pupil cohort sizes

This analysis is informing a structured approach to estate optimisation, including:

- Creation and expansion of Inclusion Units within mainstream and nursery settings
- Re-purposing of underutilised spaces to increase inclusive capacity
- Expansion or redesign of specialist provision where demand is concentrated
- Improvement of mainstream estate accessibility and inclusivity, in line with BB104 requirements

This work ensures that capital investment is targeted where it will have the greatest impact on outcomes, access and system sustainability, and that decisions are evidence-based, transparent, and aligned to long-term demand.

System impact and outcomes

Together, these interventions will deliver a more responsive, equitable and sustainable SEND system across Lambeth. The programme is designed to ensure that children and young people receive the right support at the right time, in the right setting, as close to home as possible.

By strengthening inclusive mainstream capacity, expanding specialist provision, and optimising the estate, the system will:

- Improve access to appropriate provision locally
- Increase mainstream inclusion and participation
- Reduce reliance on out-of-borough and independent placements
- Improve educational outcomes and transitions
- Enhance system efficiency and value for money

This approach ensures that capital investment directly supports improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND, while maximising the value of existing assets and delivering a coherent long-term sufficiency strategy aligned to system demand.

9. **System partner and stakeholder engagement, and co-production.**

Please outline how the local area partnership plans to engage system partners and stakeholders to develop and implement the plan – include planned engagement with schools and early years settings, alternative providers, FE and post-16 providers (including those your young people attend that are not within your local area), Parents and Carers and children and young people with SEND, with reference to the core minimum requirements. Consider changing roles and responsibilities in the context of the Schools White Paper and how you work collaboratively to manage the transition. Please indicate where additional support is required to engage partners or stakeholders - senior officials at the Department for Education will be available to contribute to summer term events with education leaders and parent carer forum leaders.

The Lambeth local area partnership has a strong foundation of collaborative working across education, health and social care, which has underpinned the development and implementation of the SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy. Governance arrangements are well established through the SEND and AP Operational Board and the SEND and AP Strategic Partnership Board, chaired by the Director of Children's Services, with representation from schools, health, social care, Parent Carer Forum representatives and wider stakeholders.

These arrangements will continue to provide strategic oversight, accountability and shared ownership of delivery. Performance and engagement insights will be used to actively inform decision-making, ensuring that partner and stakeholder feedback contributes directly to implementation and system improvement. Governance arrangements will support both collaboration and constructive challenge across partners to drive continuous improvement and ensure delivery remains focused on outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Clear ownership of delivery will be established across partners, with schools, trusts, health providers and local authority services working collectively to improve inclusion, reduce variation and deliver consistent outcomes across the borough. Engagement will support a shift in system behaviour, with increased shared responsibility for inclusion across all partners.

The partnership will engage schools and educational settings through a locality-based cluster model aligned to Best Start Family Hubs and Integrated Neighbourhood Plans. This model will strengthen collaboration between mainstream schools, SEND Inclusion Units, Alternative Provision, early years settings and post-16 providers by creating regular opportunities for shared planning, workforce development and peer support.

The Area SENCo Team, Assistant Educational Psychologists (AEPs), outreach teams and therapy services will work directly within clusters to support schools to develop inclusive practice and improve consistency across the borough.

This approach will support schools to take collective responsibility for inclusion within their localities, reducing variation between settings and strengthening the consistency of the SEND offer.

Engagement with early years providers will build on existing integrated approaches to early identification and intervention, including Area SENCo support, WellComm implementation and locality-based Educational Psychology consultations.

Alternative Provision settings and SEND Inclusion Units will continue to be engaged through the Three Tier Approach and locality inclusion planning, with strengthened representation within governance and strategic development activity.

The partnership recognises the importance of strengthening engagement with Further Education and post-16 providers, including those attended by Lambeth young people outside the borough. Engagement will include targeted collaboration through transition planning forums, Preparing for Adulthood pathways and multi-agency workshops focused on inclusive provision and student voice. This will ensure that post-16 pathways are aligned to the wider reform programme and delivered consistently across the partnership.

Co-production with children, young people and families is central to the Reform Plan. The SEND and AP Strategy (2025–2030) was developed through extensive engagement involving children and young people, families and practitioners across education, health and care. This engagement has directly influenced delivery priorities, including the design of the locality cluster model, the expansion of SEND Inclusion Units and the focus on earlier intervention and improving access to support without the need for statutory assessment.

Co-production will inform both the design and prioritisation of delivery, ensuring that reform activity reflects the lived experience of children, young people and families. This approach will continue through:

- annual surveys;
- locality engagement events;
- SEND Youth Council activity;
- Parent Carer Forum engagement; and

- “You Said, We Did” feedback processes.

Engagement will be continuous and embedded within delivery, rather than limited to discrete consultation activity. Engagement approaches will be designed to ensure participation is representative of Lambeth’s diverse communities, including those less likely to engage through traditional forums.

Co-production will be embedded across the full reform cycle, informing design, implementation and evaluation. Feedback from children, young people and families will be triangulated with performance data and professional insight to ensure a comprehensive understanding of system performance.

Feedback loop and adaptation

Engagement will operate as a continuous feedback loop, whereby stakeholder insight informs delivery priorities, impact is monitored through performance and experience measures, and learning is used to adapt implementation over time. This will ensure that co-production directly influences service improvement, scaling decisions and refinement of delivery approaches.

Children and young people’s voice will directly inform improvements in both experience and outcomes across the system.

The local area is responding proactively to changing roles and responsibilities outlined within the Schools White Paper. A stakeholder workshop was held to complete the Maturity Assessment Tool and gather feedback on key areas for development, alongside consultation with children and young people through SEMH Inclusion Units.

Through the Experts at Hand locality model, schools will be supported to take greater collective responsibility for inclusion, workforce development and early intervention. School leaders, governors and trusts will be engaged through cluster-based governance, SEND training and locality inclusion planning.

This approach strengthens system leadership and ensures all partners are collectively accountable for delivering improved outcomes and reducing inequalities across Lambeth.

Additional support from the Department for Education would be welcomed to strengthen engagement and system leadership during implementation. In particular, engagement from senior DfE officials at partnership events with schools, trusts and families would support alignment to national reform priorities, strengthen collective accountability and support consistent messaging across the system.

10. **Risks and Mitigations**

What are the key risks that could affect the successful implementation of your Local SEND Reform Plan, and what mitigation strategies are in place to manage these risks? Please include a maximum of 5 risks with impact and likelihood RAG for each risk. See Annex C for suggested risk matrix.

Lambeth SEND Reform – Risk and Mitigation Overview

Delivery of Lambeth's SEND Reform Plan is supported by a robust and actively managed risk framework, with clear oversight, defined ownership, and embedded mitigation strategies across all priority workstreams. The partnership has identified a focused set of system-critical risks, reflecting both local pressures and national challenges within the SEND system, and has taken a proactive approach to managing these through strengthened governance, performance monitoring, and adaptive delivery.

The most significant risks relate to workforce capacity, financial sustainability, and system demand pressures. Timely recruitment of key professionals to deliver the Experts at Hand (EaH) model presents an early implementation risk; however, this is being actively mitigated through established recruitment pipelines, workforce planning, and contingency arrangements, including phased delivery and

commissioned capacity. Similarly, the High Needs Block deficit and funding uncertainty remain critical, with mitigation centred on tighter financial oversight, demand management, and a strategic shift towards inclusive provision to reduce reliance on high-cost placements.

Demand-side pressures, including a potential increase in EHCP applications, are being addressed through strengthened communication with families, enhanced co-production, and the expansion of early intervention pathways to build confidence in mainstream provision. Delivery risks associated with system engagement and model assumptions, including academy participation and inclusion growth, are mitigated through targeted leadership engagement, performance tracking, and the flexibility to adapt delivery models in response to emerging data.

Overall, Lambeth's approach reflects strong system grip, clear accountability, and resilience, with continuous review mechanisms ensuring risks are actively managed and mitigations remain responsive, proportionate, and focused on safeguarding delivery and long-term sustainability.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation	Residual RAG
Timely recruitment of key professionals for EaH including AEP, SALT and Area SENCo's	Moderate – Critical Delays to recruitment would impact delivery of the locality model, reduce access to early intervention and limit the system's	30%	R / A	Recruitment already underway, including workforce pipeline development and planned Educational Psychology recruitment. **Enhanced:** Accountable ownership sits with SEND senior leadership and workforce leads. Workforce capacity will be monitored through monthly performance reviews.	A

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation	Residual RAG
	ability to reduce escalation into statutory processes.			**Escalation:** Workforce gaps exceeding agreed thresholds will trigger prioritisation of delivery within high-need areas. **Contingency:** Use of commissioned services, agency capacity and phased implementation of the EaH model. Early indicators of risk will be identified through the performance framework.	
Increase in EHCP applications due to families' concern regarding SEND Reform changes	Moderate Increased demand may place pressure on statutory services and impact planned reductions in escalation and improved inclusion.	25%	A	Increased communication with Lambeth Parent Carer Forum and through the Local Offer. **Enhanced:** Co-production, transparent "You Said, We Did" communication and strengthened early intervention offer to build confidence in mainstream provision. **Escalation:** Sustained increases above trajectory thresholds will trigger review of early intervention capacity and statutory processes. **Contingency:** Re-prioritisation of resources to	A / G

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation	Residual RAG
				support statutory demand and reinforce inclusion pathways.	
Pressure on High Needs Block deficit and uncertainty on 2027–28 funding	Critical Financial pressure may limit ability to sustain workforce investment and provision expansion, impacting delivery and long-term sustainability.	40%	R	Continued work to reduce EHCNA requests in lower banding and strengthen EaH offer. **Enhanced:** Financial and performance data will be jointly reviewed to monitor demand, placement mix and cost pressures. **Escalation:** Variance from demand or cost trajectories will trigger resource reallocation and reprioritisation of delivery activity. **Contingency:** Phasing of implementation, prioritisation of inclusion-led interventions and adjustment of commissioning and placement strategies. Where required, resources will be prioritised towards areas of greatest impact on outcomes and sustainability.	R / A

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation	Residual RAG
Engagement of academies with SEND Cluster Delivery Model	Negligible – Moderate Low engagement would reduce consistency of delivery and limit impact of the locality model across all settings.	40%	G	Leadership Network and CEO Network established to build relationships. **Enhanced:** Clear accountability through locality structures and alignment with trust priorities. **Escalation:** Participation data will identify variation in engagement, triggering targeted leadership engagement. **Contingency:** Strengthened partnership agreements and targeted support to under-engaged settings.	G
Delivery model assumptions (inclusion growth, workforce capacity and utilisation of local provision)	Moderate – Critical If assumptions are not realised, the system may not achieve planned reductions in escalation, specialist demand or financial sustainability.	35%	R / A	Assumptions will be tested through the SEND performance framework, including monitoring of inclusion rates, workforce capacity and utilisation of provision. **Enhanced:** Accountable ownership sits with programme and performance leads. **Escalation:** Performance outside agreed	A

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation	Residual RAG
				thresholds will trigger structured review and adaptation of delivery approaches. **Contingency:** Adjustment of workforce deployment, scaling of effective practice, revision of sufficiency planning and commissioning strategy. Adaptation of delivery approaches is expected as part of implementation. **Review points:** Ongoing through monthly operational reviews and quarterly governance cycles.	

These risks are interdependent, particularly in relation to workforce capacity, inclusion growth and financial sustainability, and will be managed holistically through the programme governance framework.

Risk ownership is shared across partners, with accountability embedded at strategic, operational and locality levels. Risks will be actively managed through ongoing monitoring, review and intervention, supported by early identification of emerging pressures through the performance framework. Residual risk levels reflect a deliberate balance between pace of implementation and maintaining system stability, with contingency planning in place to support adaptation where assumptions do not materialise as expected.

11. **Dependencies**

Please detail the key areas of the local area partnership's proposed SEND future state and roadmap that may be impacted by wider reforms nationally and locally and outline how you will manage these. We expect these will include but not be limited to:

- NHS reforms
- Local Government Re-organisation
- Reforms to Children's Social Care
- Best Start in Life, including Family Hubs
- Best Start In Life Strategy
- Curriculum and Assessment Review

Dependencies

The delivery of Lambeth's SEND Reform Plan is inherently interdependent with a range of national and local system reforms, spanning children's social care, health, education and wider public service transformation, including Local Government Reorganisation and curriculum reform. These dependencies present a dual dynamic: significant opportunities to accelerate integration, earlier intervention and inclusive practice, alongside material risks relating to alignment, pace and system capacity.

Lambeth's approach is deliberately proactive, structured and adaptive, ensuring dependencies are explicitly understood and actively managed. Alignment across reforms will not be assumed; it will be secured through integrated governance, joint planning and a single

shared performance framework, ensuring a consistent understanding of delivery, demand and outcomes across all partners. Dependencies are treated as core delivery drivers, with explicit sequencing, monitoring and escalation built into programme governance.

Strategic Dependencies and System Integration

A critical dependency is alignment with Children's Social Care reform, including the Family Help model and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These reforms are central to Lambeth's ambition to deliver earlier, family-centred intervention and reduce escalation into statutory SEND processes. Misalignment or delay could increase demand for statutory intervention. This is mitigated through joint governance, shared ownership of early intervention pathways and aligned delivery across services, with interim arrangements ensuring continuity where reform programmes progress at different paces.

The Best Start in Life Strategy and Family Hub programme are similarly foundational to early identification and intervention. These are fully integrated within Lambeth's locality model, with SEND support embedded within Family Hubs and aligned to integrated neighbourhood delivery. Where variation in implementation or reach occurs, targeted intervention, resource alignment and locality-based planning will ensure equitable access and consistency.

The ongoing evolution of the NHS and Integrated Care System (ICS)—including service reconfiguration and commissioning reform—represents a further key dependency. The effectiveness of the Experts at Hand (EaH) model relies on aligned health commissioning, workforce capacity and multidisciplinary delivery. Risks will be mitigated through joint commissioning arrangements, integrated governance, and flexible service models, with phased delivery and prioritisation of high-impact interventions where capacity constraints arise.

Education System and Curriculum Reform Dependencies

National developments emerging from the Curriculum and Assessment Review and wider education reform represent an important dependency, influencing school capacity, accountability expectations and prioritisation of inclusion. These changes may impact schools' ability to engage fully with SEND reform.

Lambeth will mitigate this by aligning SEND reform with school improvement functions and the locality cluster model, ensuring that national expectations for curriculum, attainment and inclusion are mutually reinforcing rather than competing priorities. Schools will be supported through CPD, peer networks and system leadership to integrate inclusive practice within curriculum delivery and accountability expectations.

Local Government Reorganisation and Wider System Change

Potential Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and wider public service reform represent a further strategic dependency, with implications for governance structures, commissioning arrangements and organisational capacity. Changes at system level may affect delivery timelines, decision-making structures and resource allocation.

Lambeth will manage this through flexible programme governance, clear accountability and maintained delivery continuity, ensuring that core SEND reform activity is insulated from structural change. Where governance or delivery arrangements shift, roles, responsibilities and reporting lines will be rapidly re-established to maintain momentum.

Delivery Dependencies: Workforce, Inclusion and System Capacity

Workforce capacity remains a critical cross-cutting dependency, particularly across Educational Psychology, therapies, SEMH and specialist outreach services. National workforce constraints present a shared system risk.

Lambeth has established a multi-layered mitigation approach, including workforce pipeline development, targeted recruitment, flexible deployment and use of commissioned capacity. Delivery will be phased and prioritised, ensuring that areas with greatest impact on outcomes and inclusion are protected, while maintaining system resilience.

The successful delivery of the reform programme also depends on the ability of mainstream settings to consistently embed inclusive practice at scale. Variability in confidence and capability across the system represents a delivery risk. This will be addressed through locality-based support, workforce development and strengthened system leadership, ensuring consistent implementation of the graduated response.

Financial Sustainability and Demand Dependencies

The delivery of SEND reform is closely linked to financial sustainability and funding assumptions, including High Needs Block pressures, demand trajectories and national funding reform. Variability in demand or funding may impact delivery pace and system capacity.

To mitigate this, Lambeth will integrate financial oversight within programme governance, with joint monitoring of demand, placement mix, cost and outcomes. Where variance from planned trajectories occurs, governance will trigger resource reallocation, reprioritisation of delivery activity and adaptation of commissioning **strategies**, ensuring sustainability is maintained alongside improved outcomes.

Adaptive Delivery, Governance and Continuous Alignment

Dependencies are actively managed through a mature governance framework that operates as a delivery system, providing strategic oversight, operational control and integrated accountability. A single shared performance framework ensures real-time visibility of performance across all partners.

Dependencies between strategic, operational and locality delivery are explicitly managed through aligned reporting cycles, ensuring a clear line of sight from system leadership to frontline practice. Where delivery deviates from agreed trajectories, governance triggers structured escalation, intervention and adaptation, maintaining delivery momentum.

The Lambeth SEND Local Area Partnership operates a robust and integrated interdependant governance framework to oversee delivery of the SEND Reform Plan, providing clear accountability, strong system leadership and disciplined delivery oversight across education, health and care. Governance is designed not only to provide assurance, but to actively drive implementation, performance improvement and system-wide accountability, ensuring that all partners work collectively towards improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Overall accountability for delivery is held by a named **Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)**, who is accountable to the SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board. This ensures clear ownership of delivery and alignment across partners, with responsibility for ensuring progress against agreed outcomes, statutory duties and system improvement priorities.

At a strategic level, the **SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board** provides system leadership, oversight and decision-making authority. The Board is co-chaired by senior leaders from the local authority and NHS South East London Integrated Care Board (ICB) and includes representation from education, health, social care, schools, multi-academy trusts, further education providers and the Parent Carer Forum. The Board is responsible for setting strategic direction, approving delivery plans, monitoring system performance and holding partners to account for delivery against agreed trajectories. Where required, decisions are escalated to wider system governance, including the Health and Wellbeing Board and ICB governance structures, ensuring alignment with broader place-based priorities.

Operational delivery is overseen by th**e SEND Operational Group**, which acts as the primary delivery arm of the partnership. The group brings together senior operational leads from across education, health, social care and commissioning and is responsible for driving implementation of the reform programme, tracking progress against milestones and outcomes, managing risks and ensuring coordinated delivery across services. The Operational Group has delegated authority to make operational decisions and resolve delivery challenges, maintaining strong grip on implementation. Where issues cannot be resolved at this level, they are formally escalated to the Strategic Partnership Board.

Governance is further strengthened through alignment with locality delivery structures, including the Experts at Hand model and wider workstream arrangements. Workstream leads and locality leads are accountable for delivery within their areas, supported by clear performance expectations and regular review. This ensures that there is a continuous flow of information between frontline delivery and system leadership, enabling rapid identification and response to variation, risk and emerging demand.

Monitoring and assurance are supported by a shared performance framework, providing consistent reporting across all governance levels. Delivery is tracked through a structured cycle of monthly operational review and termly strategic oversight, with performance measured

against key indicators including inclusion, attendance, demand, timeliness and outcomes.
This is informed by a triangulated evidence base, combining quantitative data with lived experience and operational insight, ensuring that governance is firmly focused on impact.

Clear escalation routes are embedded within this framework. Where performance deviates from agreed expectations, issues are escalated through operational and strategic governance, triggering targeted intervention, resource reallocation or adaptation of delivery approaches. This ensures that governance remains responsive, proportionate and outcomes-focused, supporting continuous improvement across the system.

Collectively, these arrangements provide a mature and well-established governance model, characterised by clear accountability, strong partnership working and a disciplined focus on outcomes. This provides confidence that delivery of the SEND Reform Plan is effectively controlled, closely monitored and capable of responding to emerging challenges, ensuring sustained improvement in the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND.

Conclusion

Lambeth's approach to dependencies reflects strong system leadership, disciplined governance and adaptive delivery capability. By embedding alignment, transparency and joint accountability across all levels of the system, the partnership ensures SEND reform remains coherent, resilient and outcome-focused, even within a complex and evolving policy landscape.

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Section 3 – Monitoring and Evaluation

12. **How will the local area partnership know delivery is on track?**

Please set out how you will monitor and track progress referencing:

- ***Monitoring tools and processes*** - the specific tools, systems, and data you will use to track delivery milestones and measure the impact on outcomes.

> *Some Local Area Partnerships hold data in a central SEND operational dashboard. This is used by teams on a weekly basis to identify trends in demand or inform conversations with local school or setting leaders.*
>
> *In some Local Area Partnerships, a view of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is reviewed monthly by a SEND Board to take decisions on prioritisation, resourcing and delivery of services informed by regular data.*

  Please set out how you will use data to track demand (e.g., EHCP applications for assessment), Service delivery (e.g., Speech and Language Specialists deployment; places created), Service quality (e.g., parental satisfaction) and outputs (e.g., pupil attendance; pupil exclusions)

- ***Feedback and adaptation mechanisms*** - what feedback loops and stakeholder input you will use to review progress and adjust your approach.

Lambeth will implement a robust, integrated performance and evaluation framework to support delivery of the SEND Reform Plan within Lambeth. This framework will provide a clear line of sight between strategic ambition, operational delivery and measurable outcomes for children and young people with SEND, ensuring that implementation is consistently outcome-focused, data-informed and aligned to financial sustainability.

The framework will build on existing strong partnership governance across education, health and social care, ensuring that performance is used actively to drive improvement, reduce variation and strengthen system-wide accountability. It will support both strategic oversight and operational management, enabling timely identification of pressures, consistent monitoring of progress and structured responses to emerging risks.

Governance and oversight

Performance will be monitored through established governance arrangements:

- Monthly SEND and Alternative Provision Operational Board
- Quarterly SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board, chaired by the Director of Children's Services

These boards will receive integrated performance reporting covering delivery, outcomes, quality and financial trajectories. Data will be used to support prioritisation, resourcing decisions and system-wide improvement.

Governance will operate as an active performance system, ensuring accountability across all partners and enabling constructive challenge, shared ownership and evidence-based decision-making.

Performance framework and indicators

A single, aligned set of performance indicators will be used consistently across education, health and care partners to ensure a shared "single version of the truth". These indicators will be mapped against baseline data and three-year trajectories, reflecting the priorities of the SEND Reform Plan.

Key performance domains will include:

- EHCP demand, cohort growth and phase transfers
- Effectiveness of SEN Support and early intervention
- Inclusion in mainstream settings and SEND Inclusion Units

- Use of Alternative Provision and independent specialist placements
- Attendance, exclusions and reintegration outcomes
- Workforce capacity, deployment and confidence
- Financial sustainability and high needs spend
- Experience and satisfaction of children, young people and families

The framework will combine leading indicators of system behaviour with longer-term outcome measures, enabling early identification of emerging pressures and assessment of impact over time.

Data, intelligence and tools

Performance monitoring will be underpinned by integrated data systems and forecasting tools, including dashboards developed through MIME and 1st Planner. These will provide real-time insight into:

- demand trends and EHCP growth
- placement sufficiency and utilisation
- workforce activity and deployment
- inclusion and exclusion patterns
- financial and commissioning pressures
- outcomes for children and young people

Data will be aligned with demand forecasting and financial modelling assumptions, ensuring that delivery remains consistent with planned trajectories and enabling continuous testing and refinement of assumptions.

A strengthened analytical function will support interpretation of data, ensuring insight is translated into action, commissioning decisions and service improvement.

Locality performance and variation

Performance will be transparent at locality and cluster level through the Experts at Hand (EaH) model, enabling clear accountability and reducing variation across settings.

Cluster-level reporting will support:

- identification of variation in practice and outcomes
- targeted intervention and support
- sharing of effective practice
- strengthened collective responsibility for inclusion

Where variation or underperformance is identified, a structured escalation process will be triggered, including:

- root cause analysis
- targeted support or intervention
- adaptation of delivery approaches
- resource reallocation where necessary

This ensures that performance management is not passive but actively drives improvement and consistency across the system.

Quality assurance and system review

A comprehensive quality assurance framework will complement performance monitoring, including:

- annual reviews of SEND Inclusion Units
- thematic audits and deep dives
- multi-agency case reviews
- monitoring of graduated response implementation
- evaluation of workforce development and inclusive practice

This will ensure that both process quality and outcome impact are systematically reviewed and improved. The current EHC Plan quality assurance framework is currently under review with a view to being revised in response to local needs. The current version is attached for ease of access. The next version of the framework will be in place for the beginning of the 2026-2027 academic year.

Qualitative insight and co-production

Quantitative data will be triangulated with qualitative insight from children, young people, families and practitioners. Engagement mechanisms will include:

- annual SEND and CYP surveys
- Parent Carer Forum engagement
- SEND Youth Council participation
- SENCo and workforce feedback
- locality engagement events
- “You Said, We Did” feedback loops

This insight will be embedded into governance and performance cycles, ensuring that lived experience directly informs service design, delivery refinement and strategic decision-making.

Continuous improvement and system learning

The performance framework will operate as a continuous improvement system, enabling ongoing learning, adaptation and refinement of delivery. It will support:

- identification of effective practice
- scaling of successful interventions
- refinement of commissioning and provision

- improved alignment between demand and capacity
- strengthened financial and operational sustainability

Over time, this approach will drive greater consistency across the system, reduce variation between localities and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Summary

Together, these arrangements establish a coherent, integrated and outcome-focused performance system that links governance, data, delivery and lived experience. It ensures that the SEND Reform Plan is delivered through a transparent, evidence-based and adaptive model, enabling Lambeth to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND while maintaining a financially sustainable and high-performing local area SEND system.

13. **Reporting to DfE**

Using the attached data template, the local area partnership is required to provide quarterly data returns to DfE against selected key metrics. DfE will, in turn, provide quarterly data reports with visualised analysis and benchmarking that will support your local delivery, monitoring and evaluation. This will include data the department holds on **Attendance**, **Exclusions**, and **Unauthorised absence**.

Please use the attached data template to upload your initial data return to DfE. The template is provided in the bundle of attachments.

Section 4 – Governance

14. **How will the local area partnership ensure delivery of plans remain on track?**

Lambeth SEND Local Area Partnership – Governance Framework Overview:

Governance, Monitoring and Accountability

The Lambeth SEND Local Area Partnership has established a robust and integrated governance framework to ensure the effective delivery of its SEND Reform Plan. This framework provides clear strategic oversight, operational control and whole-system accountability, reflecting national expectations that effective SEND systems are underpinned by strong joint leadership, clear accountability and coordinated partnership working across education, health and care.

Governance in Lambeth operates not solely as an assurance function, but as a dynamic delivery system, actively driving implementation, performance improvement and system-wide accountability. All partners—i**ncluding the local authority, NHS South East London Integrated Care Board (ICB), education providers, social care and the voluntary sector**—are collectively accountable for outcomes. This approach ensures shared ownership of delivery, transparent performance management and clearly defined escalation routes, aligning with best practice in high-performing local systems.

At the core of the Lambeth SEND system governance model is a single, shared performance framework, providing a consistent "single version of the truth" across all partners. This integrates data on demand, delivery, quality and outcomes, enabling leaders to maintain real-time oversight of system performance. This is complemented by qualitative insight from children, young people and families, alongside operational intelligence from schools and practitioners, ensuring a triangulated understanding of impact. Together, this enables evidence-informed decision-making and ensures alignment between strategic priorities and delivery.

Strategic Governance and Accountability

The SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board provides overall system leadership and accountability for delivery of the SEND Reform Plan. The Board is co-chaired by senior local authority and ICB leaders and includes representation from education,

health, social care, schools, multi-academy trusts, further education providers and the Parent Carer Forum, ensuring that governance is both multi-agency and co-produced.

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) holds overall accountability for delivery of the SEND Reform Plan and is accountable to the Strategic Partnership Board for ensuring delivery against agreed outcomes, statutory responsibilities and system-wide improvement.

The Board operates with clear decision-making authority and is responsible for:

- Setting strategic direction aligned to the SEND and AP Strategy
- Approving reform priorities and delivery plans
- Monitoring performance across demand, quality and outcomes
- Holding partners to account for delivery against agreed trajectories
- Removing system-level barriers and enabling coordinated action

Where required, decisions are escalated to the Health and Wellbeing Board, ICB governance structures and wider place-based system leadership to ensure alignment with broader priorities.

Operational Governance and Delivery Control

The SEND Operational Group acts as the primary delivery arm of the partnership, translating strategic priorities into coordinated, system-wide action. It is chaired by senior operational leadership and brings together key leads across education, health, social care and commissioning, including designated health professionals.

The Operational Group is responsible for:

- Driving delivery of the SEND Reform Plan and associated action plans
- Tracking progress against milestones, outputs and outcomes
- Monitoring performance variation and system risk
- Ensuring aligned, integrated delivery across partners

The group operates with delegated authority to make operational decisions, resolve delivery challenges and hold partners accountable for implementation. Through regular and structured performance review, it maintains strong delivery grip, ensuring that issues are identified early and addressed at pace.

Where risks or barriers cannot be resolved at operational level, they are formally escalated to the **Strategic Partnership Board**, ensuring timely system-level intervention and decision-making.

Integrated System Delivery and Locality Accountability

Governance is further strengthened through the alignment of strategic, operational and locality delivery structures, including implementation of the Experts at Hand locality cluster model. Workstream leads and locality leads are accountable for delivery within their areas, supported by clear performance expectations, defined outcomes and regular review mechanisms.

Dependencies between strategic priorities and frontline delivery are actively managed through aligned governance and reporting cycles. This ensures:

- Delivery is coordinated across education, health and care
- Performance information flows effectively between frontline services and system leadership
- Variation in practice is identified and addressed, driving consistency across the system

This integrated approach ensures that governance is closely connected to delivery and responsive to local need.

Performance Management, Escalation and Continuous Improvement

Performance management is central to the governance model, with delivery tracked against a shared set of measures and trajectories, including inclusion, attendance, demand, timeliness and outcomes.

Monitoring is undertaken through a structured cycle of:

- Monthly operational performance review
- Termly strategic governance oversight
- Regular reporting across partnership governance structures

Clear escalation routes are embedded within this framework. Where delivery deviates from expected trajectories:

- Issues are escalated through operational and strategic governance
- Targeted intervention is agreed and implemented
- Resources are reprioritised to areas of greatest need and impact
- Delivery approaches are adapted in response to evidence and learning

This ensures governance remains responsive, proportionate and focused on outcomes, supporting continuous improvement across the system.

Conclusion

The Lambeth SEND System governance framework represents a mature, integrated model of system leadership, characterised by clear accountability, strong partnership working and a disciplined focus on outcomes. By embedding joint ownership, structured performance management, clear decision-making and proactive escalation, the partnership ensures that delivery of SEND reform is effectively governed, closely monitored and continuously refined. This provides confidence that the programme will remain on track, responsive to emerging need and aligned to its core objective—delivering improved experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Governance Mechanism *This may be a governance group, or an individual (e.g. SRO).*	**Purpose/ Responsibilities** *What is the function of this governance mechanism? What are they accountable for overseeing? What information is reported to this governance mechanism?*	**Membership** *Who does this governance mechanism comprise of? [should include health and PCF representation] What stakeholders are represented at this governance mechanism? Please indicate who chairs this.* *(Include n/a if an individual).*	**Cadence** *How regularly does this governance mechanism meet?*	**Decision Rights** *What decisions can this governance mechanism make?*	**Escalation Route** *Where can this governance mechanism escalate issues or decision to?*
SEND & Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board (SRO reports into Strategic Board)	• Provides strategic leadership and overall accountability for SEND Reform delivery. • The SRO is accountable for the Local SEND Reform Plan, ensuring statutory compliance, system alignment and improved outcomes. • Oversees the SEND & AP Strategy, monitors performance and removes system-level barriers.	• Senior leaders across local authority, NHS/ICB, education, social care, VCS and Parent/Carer Forum. Co-chaired by Corporate Director of Children, Families & Education and Director of Integrated Children's Commissioning and Youth Services LBL & NHS Southeast London Integrated Care System	Quarterly	Sets strategic priorities, approves reform plans, holds partners to account. Decisions by consensus with Chair/SRO oversight.	Escalates to Health & Wellbeing Board / ICB and wider partnership governance.
SEND Operational Group (Delivery arm)	• Responsible for operational delivery of the SEND Reform Plan.	• Operational and senior leads across education, health, social care		Makes operational decisions, drives improvement and	Escalates risks, barriers and strategic decisions

Governance Mechanism *This may be a governance group, or an individual (e.g. SRO).*	**Purpose/ Responsibilities** *What is the function of this governance mechanism? What are they accountable for overseeing? What information is reported to this governance mechanism?*	**Membership** *Who does this governance mechanism comprise of? [should include health and PCF representation] What stakeholders are represented at this governance mechanism? Please indicate who chairs this. (Include n/a if an individual).*	**Cadence** *How regularly does this governance mechanism meet?*	**Decision Rights** *What decisions can this governance mechanism make?*	**Escalation Route** *Where can this governance mechanism escalate issues or decision to?*
	• Responsible for operational delivery of SEND and AP Strategy – Action Plan • Tracks progress, manages risks, aligns services and drives performance improvement.	and commissioning, including health representation (DMO/DCO). • Chaired by Assistant Director, Education Strategy, Access, and Inclusion		holding partners accountable to action plan. Delivers multi-agency actions and resolves delivery issues.	to the Strategic Partnership Board. Reports on key outcomes and success metrics to partnership.

If you have a diagram to show the relationship between these governance mechanisms, please upload this here. The Governance map is provided as an attachment in the bundle of provided attachments.

Section 5 – Central Government Support

15. **How can we help you?**

Please outline any practical support you need from central government to implement your plan effectively.

This may include:

- Access to specialist expertise or advisory support
- Help with workforce development or recruitment challenges
- Tools or templates to support data collection, reporting, or evaluation
- Facilitation of peer learning or regional collaboration
- Support with system-level coordination across education, health, and care
- Guidance on navigating regulatory or policy barriers

The local area partnership has strong foundations to deliver the SEND Reform Plan through established multi-agency governance, integrated commissioning arrangements and a clear inclusion-focused strategy. However, targeted national support will enable delivery at pace, strengthen workforce capacity and ensure long-term sustainability.

All requests set out below are directly linked to delivery risks and dependencies identified within this plan, particularly in relation to workforce capacity, integrated delivery and financial sustainability.

Targeted implementation support and sector expertise

Targeted access to national implementation support and specialist expertise is required to support system transformation, particularly in relation to inclusive mainstream practice, locality delivery and expansion of SEND Inclusion Units. This includes support from national advisers, access to sector expertise and structured learning from areas implementing similar delivery models.

This would enable:

- more consistent implementation of the Experts at Hand locality model;
- improved quality assurance of inclusive practice; and
- reduced variation in delivery across schools and localities.

Workforce recruitment and retention support

Workforce capacity remains a key implementation risk, particularly across Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy and specialist outreach services. Targeted national support is required to strengthen recruitment pipelines, training pathways and retention strategies. This includes:

- expansion of national workforce programmes;
- support for Assistant Educational Psychologist pathways; and
- flexible training and development routes for SEND specialists.

This would enable:

- sustainable workforce growth to support early intervention;

- more consistent delivery of multidisciplinary support; and
- mitigation of risks relating to workforce availability identified in the delivery and risk sections.

Guidance on locality delivery and multidisciplinary models

As Lambeth implements the Experts at Hand model, further national guidance and clarity on locality-based and multidisciplinary delivery models would strengthen implementation.

This includes support on:

- effective operating models;
- workforce integration across education, health and care; and
- governance and accountability for locality delivery.

This would enable:

- more consistent implementation across partnerships;
- stronger alignment between systems; and
- acceleration of locality-based reform.

Health system alignment and national coordination

Effective SEND delivery is dependent on alignment between education, health and care systems, particularly in relation to therapy provision and integrated commissioning. Continued national coordination between the Department for Education, NHS England and Integrated Care Systems is required to align priorities, workforce planning and commissioning expectations.

This would enable:

- more consistent access to health support within multidisciplinary models;
- reduced variability in local service availability; and
- mitigation of risks relating to health system capacity identified within the plan.

Data, forecasting and benchmarking support

The partnership would benefit from enhanced national tools and guidance to support data analysis, forecasting and benchmarking.

This includes:

- standardised dashboards and templates;
- access to national benchmarking data; and
- improved modelling tools to support demand forecasting.

This would enable:

- stronger evidence-informed decision-making;
- improved tracking of reform impact; and
- more consistent comparison across local and national data sets.

Peer learning and regional collaboration

Facilitated peer learning and structured regional collaboration would support implementation, particularly in relation to inclusion models, locality delivery and sufficiency planning.

This would enable:

- accelerated improvement through shared learning;
- reduction in duplication of development work; and
- stronger alignment across local areas implementing similar reforms.

National guidance on inclusion and mainstream delivery

Further clarity is required regarding national expectations for inclusive mainstream practice, SEND accountability and the role of schools and trusts within the evolving system.

This includes:

- guidance on SEND Inclusion Units and mainstream inclusion infrastructure;

- clarity on accountability for SEND outcomes within trusts; and
- alignment with wider school reform and accountability frameworks.

This would enable:

- increased confidence across schools and trusts;
- more consistent implementation of inclusion; and
- accelerated system-wide behaviour change.

Overall impact of national support

Collectively, this support would:

- mitigate key risks relating to workforce, system alignment and demand;
- accelerate implementation of the locality delivery model; and
- strengthen the long-term sustainability of the SEND system.

It would also provide greater confidence and clarity across the local partnership, enabling delivery to be scaled more consistently and at pace.

Annex B - Supporting Documents

Document	Link
The Schools White Paper	Every Child Achieving and Thriving
SEND Consultation Document	SEND reform: putting children and young people first.
LA and Schools Budget 2026-27	Schools Operational Guide 2026-27
Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Guidance and Tool	Provided as an attachment
Local SEND Reform Plan – Data template	Provided as an attachment
Local SEND Reform Plan Quality Assessment Framework	Provided as an attachment
Local Inclusion Partnership Grant 2026-27	To be published Spring 2026

Experts at Hand Guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-send-reform-developing-the-experts-at-hand-offer
High Needs Capital Allocations 2026-27	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69c2b89d3ed0546101e0dbfd/high-needs-provision-capital-allocations-grant-determination-letter-for-2026-to-2027.pdf
Guidance on Inclusion bases	To be published Spring 2026
Lambeth SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025-2030	https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeths-send-local-offer/send-background-law/send-alternative-provision-strategy
Lambeth Local Area SEND Self Evaluation Framework (SEF)	Provided as an attachment
Lambeth SEN Cohort Animation tool 2026	Provided as an attachment
Lambeth Interactive SEND Dashboard – School Level – January 2026	Provided as an attachment
SEND System Governance Framework	Provided as an attachment

Mime Approach to EHCP Cohort Forecasting	Provided as an attachment

Annex C – Risk Matrix

IMPACT DESCRIPTION	IMPACT LEVEL	PROBABILITY/LIKELIHOOD				
		≤ 10%	>10% - <30%	>30% - <60%	>60% - <90%	>90%
		Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Very Likely
Cannot deliver Reform Plan; Failure of mission critical activity.	Crisis					
Significant impact to objectives; Significant and sustained disruption to activity.	Critical					
Delivery targets are compromised; Project delay / budget overrun.	Moderate					
Limited impact on delivery targets; Deviations from project resource, timescale or targets.	Marginal					
Minimal impact on delivery targets; Minimal impacts to project / programme efficiency.	Negligible					

Annex D - Alignment to DfE SEND Reform Plan Core Requirements

The table below demonstrates how Lambeth's SEND Reform Plan aligns with DfE expectations and core requirements for effective local SEND system reform, providing clear signposting to where each core requirement is addressed within the plan. The plan has been deliberately designed to be strategically strong, operationally credible and explicitly outcome-led, with a clear line of sight between activity, outputs and measurable improvements for children and young people. It is underpinned by a robust, evidence-informed approach, drawing on triangulated intelligence from performance data, lived experience and frontline delivery insight to ensure that progress is both measurable and grounded in the experiences of children, young people, families and practitioners. Governance arrangements are well-established and provide strong delivery grip, with clear accountability, regular review points and defined escalation pathways to ensure implementation remains on track and responsive to emerging evidence.

Lambeth's approach is further strengthened by a demonstrated track record of delivery and impact. Despite operating in a context of comparatively high and increasingly complex levels of need, the local area has consistently maintained a lower-than-average High Needs spend relative to statistical neighbours and has achieved strong outcomes for children and young people, including low exclusion rates and sustained mainstream inclusion. These outcomes reflect a long-standing, evidence-informed commitment across partners to inclusion, early intervention and effective local provision.

This is supported by mature and experienced system leadership across education, health and care, with well-established partnership working and strong co-production with children, young people and families. Taken together, this positions Lambeth not only as meeting DfE requirements, but as a system with the capability, discipline and leadership to deliver sustainable improvement, scale effective practice and continuously refine its approach based on what demonstrably improves outcomes.

The plan also ensures that all Core Minimum Requirements are clearly addressed and visible across delivery. This includes the strengthening and consistent application of the Universal Offer and Ordinarily Available Provision, ensuring that mainstream settings are equipped to meet a wide range of needs at the earliest stage. Schools, multi-academy trusts, further education providers and the Parent Carer Forum play an active role in both delivery and governance, influencing strategic direction, local implementation and quality

assurance. The Experts at Hand (EaH) model has been designed to include post-16 provision, including out-of-area further education providers accessed by Lambeth young people, ensuring that locality-based support and system expertise extends across the full 0–25 pathway. In addition, independent advice, mediation and support services, including SENDIASS, are embedded within the wider reform approach, contributing to improved transparency, strengthened relationships with families and increased confidence in the SEND system. These elements are explicitly linked to the delivery of improved outcomes, ensuring that system reform is both inclusive and responsive to the needs and experiences of children, young people and families

DfE Core Requirement	Where this is addressed in the Lambeth SEND Reform Plan
A clearly articulated vision for children and young people with SEND, focused on improved outcomes and inclusion	• Blueprint section – outcomes narrative and system vision • 3-Year Roadmap (intended outcomes and inclusion ambition) • Year 3 impact outcomes (attainment, PfA, sustained destinations)
A focus on improving outcomes for children and young people, rather than solely describing activity	• Blueprint narrative (explicit focus on outcomes and impact) • Workstream outcome statements across Year 1 plan • Success measures and target metrics (attendance, inclusion, EHCP trends)
Clarity in distinguishing between implementation activity, operational outputs and measurable outcomes	• Embedded across roadmap and delivery model (EaH, Inclusion Units, SEMH) • Year 1 delivery plan (milestones and trajectory columns) • Blueprint narrative (explicit delivery logic)
Clear and measurable success indicators to track progress over time	• Success measures section (quantitative KPIs) • Target metrics (EHCP growth, mainstream inclusion, absence) • Year 1 trajectories (Q2–Q4 expected progress positions)

DfE Core Requirement	Where this is addressed in the Lambeth SEND Reform Plan
A strong emphasis on early identification of need and timely intervention	• Experts at Hand (EaH) model (locality clusters and Gateway) • SEMH and Early Intervention workstream • Early Years and WellComm delivery
A commitment to increasing inclusive practice and reducing reliance on specialist placements	• Mainstream inclusion growth projections (+13%) • SEND Inclusion Unit expansion strategy • Reduction in ISS placements and AP reliance
A clear sufficiency strategy to ensure needs are met locally wherever possible	• SEND Inclusion Unit expansion programme • Sufficiency planning and forecasting tools • Placement pathway development (assessment places, local provision)
Workforce development to ensure professionals have the skills and capacity required	• Assistant Educational Psychologist (AEP) programme • EP, SALT and SEMH workforce expansion • CPD and cluster-based training offers
Evidence of strong partnership working across education, health and care	• Integrated commissioning arrangements (LA and ICB) • Multi-agency cluster delivery model • Joint governance structures (Operational and Strategic Boards)
Effective co-production with children, young people and families	• Parent Carer Forum engagement and consultation • Youth participation and SEND Youth Council

DfE Core Requirement	Where this is addressed in the Lambeth SEND Reform Plan
	• "You said, we did" reporting approach
Use of data and intelligence to inform planning, delivery and evaluation	• SEND dashboards (MIME, 1st Planner) • Forecasting and demand modelling • Data and quality assurance framework
Evidence of triangulation of information, including data, lived experience and professional insight	• Blueprint narrative (triangulated evidence model) • Year 1 delivery narrative • QA processes including surveys, panels and practitioner feedback
Robust governance arrangements with clear accountability for delivery	• SEND Strategic Partnership Board and Operational Board • Workstream leads identified in delivery plan • Governance and accountability sections
Clear implementation review points and ongoing performance monitoring	• Monthly operational review and tracking • Termly strategic governance review cycles • Year 2 embedding and QA stage
Defined escalation routes where progress or performance is not on track	• Escalation through Operational and Strategic Boards • Performance monitoring and intervention points • QA and oversight processes

DfE Core Requirement	Where this is addressed in the Lambeth SEND Reform Plan
Clarity on decision-making processes, including when to scale, adapt or discontinue activity	• Blueprint narrative (scale/adapt/redesign approach) • Year 1 workstream delivery logic • Year 3 continuous improvement model
A clear approach to financial sustainability and value for money	• High Needs Block sustainability narrative • Reduction in ISS and transport costs • Forecasting and financial modelling sections
A focus on preparation for adulthood and longer-term outcomes	• Year 3 priorities (employment, independence, destinations) • Independent Travel Training model • FE and post-16 engagement
Reducing variation and ensuring consistency of practice across the local area	• Cluster-based delivery model (equitable access) • QA and school improvement functions • Workforce development programme
A commitment to continuous improvement informed by evaluation and learning	• Year 3 evaluation and optimisation phase • QA and performance framework • Learning from implementation and pilot delivery
A clear and consistently applied Universal Offer and Ordinarily Available Provision across all settings	• Universal Offer development referenced in Year 2 priorities and partnership agreement with schools and MATs

DfE Core Requirement	Where this is addressed in the Lambeth SEND Reform Plan
	• Experts at Hand (EaH) model strengthening universal and group-level support across clusters • Workforce development and CPD programme supporting inclusive practice • QA and school improvement functions ensuring consistency of delivery across settings
Clear involvement of schools, MATs, FE providers and the Parent Carer Forum in shaping delivery and governance	• Co-production section (Parent Carer Forum engagement and influence) • Governance structures (Strategic Partnership Board and Operational Board representation) • Cluster delivery model (school-led locality collaboration) • FE engagement through South Bank Colleges and planned expansion • "You said, we did" approach strengthening feedback loops into decision-making
Inclusion of out-of-area FE providers within local delivery models and support systems	• Post-16 and FE delivery within EaH model (initial focus on South Bank Colleges with planned scaling) • Educational Psychology Service engagement with FE providers (CPD and workshops) • Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) strategy and post-16 pathways • Commitment to extending locality-based support to wider FE providers accessed by Lambeth learners

DfE Core Requirement	Where this is addressed in the Lambeth SEND Reform Plan
Access to independent advice, mediation and services to support families and build system confidence	• SENDIASS and family support referenced within Local Offer and engagement sections • Co-production and Parent Carer Forum activity • "You said, we did" reporting and feedback mechanisms • Focus on improving family experience and confidence in system navigation • Reduction in tribunal and complaints supported through early resolution and improved transparency

Annex E – The Lambeth Experts at Hand Model

The Lambeth Experts at Hand (EaH) model is a central delivery mechanism within the SEND Reform Plan, designed to extend and strengthen the existing SEND system rather than replace it. It provides additional capacity across education, health and care, increasing the reach, consistency and coordination of specialist support available to all settings. By building on established outreach, therapy and advisory services, the model ensures that expertise is deployed more systematically and equitably, aligned to local need and embedded within a coherent partnership framework.

The model operates through a locality-based approach, bringing together schools, services and practitioners within defined clusters aligned to Family Hubs and Integrated Neighbourhood arrangements. This structure enables earlier access to specialist expertise, allowing schools to respond to emerging needs before escalation. Through enhanced Gateway access and coordinated multi-agency working, the model supports timely consultation, strengthens decision-making at SEN Support and reduces reliance on statutory processes. In doing so, it shifts the system towards earlier intervention, improving flow and ensuring more consistent experiences for children, young people and families.

A core feature of the EaH model is its focus on workforce development and sustainable system capacity. Specialist input is delivered alongside structured professional development, coaching and in-school modelling, ensuring that knowledge is embedded within the wider workforce. This approach builds confidence and capability across settings, strengthens inclusive practice and supports a long-term shift from reactive intervention to a more preventative, system-led model.

The EaH model also provides clear additionality by increasing both the availability and consistency of support across all settings. By reducing variation in access to specialist expertise, it ensures that provision is based on need rather than system navigation or capacity. This strengthens equity across the system and supports a more consistent application of inclusive practice. Importantly, the model extends across the full 0–25 pathway, including post-16 provision. Further education providers, including those within and beyond the local area accessed by Lambeth learners, are incorporated through workforce development, Educational Psychology involvement and pathway design. This ensures that the principles of early intervention, specialist access and capacity-building are applied consistently across phases, with a clear focus on preparation for adulthood and sustained outcomes.

Collectively, the EaH model acts as a system-strengthening approach, directly aligned to improving outcomes. By increasing access to specialist expertise, enabling earlier intervention and building workforce capability, it contributes to increased mainstream inclusion, improved attendance and engagement, reduced exclusions and a sustained reduction in reliance on high-cost specialist provision. In this way, it provides a scalable and sustainable framework for delivering improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND.