North Tyneside SEND Reform Plan



NHS North East and North Cumbria

North Tyneside Council

North Tyneside's SEND reform journey

North Tyneside is building on strong foundations to develop a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system that is inclusive, sustainable and focused on improving outcomes for children and young people.

The Local Area Partnership's SEND Reform Plan was heavily influenced by our recently co-produced SEND Inclusion Strategy, the development of which was led by North Tyneside Parent Carer Forum.

The SEND Reform Plan key priorities align with those identified in the SEND and Inclusion Strategy.



Creating a person-centred, needs-led system.



Improving inclusion in mainstream settings.



Ensuring local provision can meet children's needs.



Expanding post-16 opportunities and support for preparing for adulthood.



These priorities will guide our work over the next three years.

We will work closely with parents, carers, children and young people as we deliver this plan, making sure their voices help shape what we do. There will be opportunities to share feedback and co-produce solutions through the Parent Carer Forum, the Local Offer and our Have Your Say website.

We know that needs, priorities and circumstances can change over time. That's why this is a living plan that will continue to develop and evolve, informed by what we hear from families and the impact of the work we are doing together.

This plan has been produced in response to national SEND reform requirements and outlines our local approach to delivering change.

Our current position

Current data shows that:

1. A lower proportion of children and young people with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) attend mainstream schools compared with the national average.

2. Attendance for children with SEND is better than many comparator areas, although absence remains above pre-pandemic levels.

3. Educational outcomes for children with SEND are generally in line with, or slightly below, competitor areas.

4. Suspension and permanent exclusion rates for children with EHCPs are low, although exclusion rates for pupils receiving SEN Support remain higher than desired.

5. Participation in education, employment and training after age 16 is strong.

Our theory of change

1.  Strengthen the Graduated Approach across all settings.

2.  Improve inclusive practice in mainstream education.

3.  Provide earlier access to specialist advice through the Experts at Hand model.

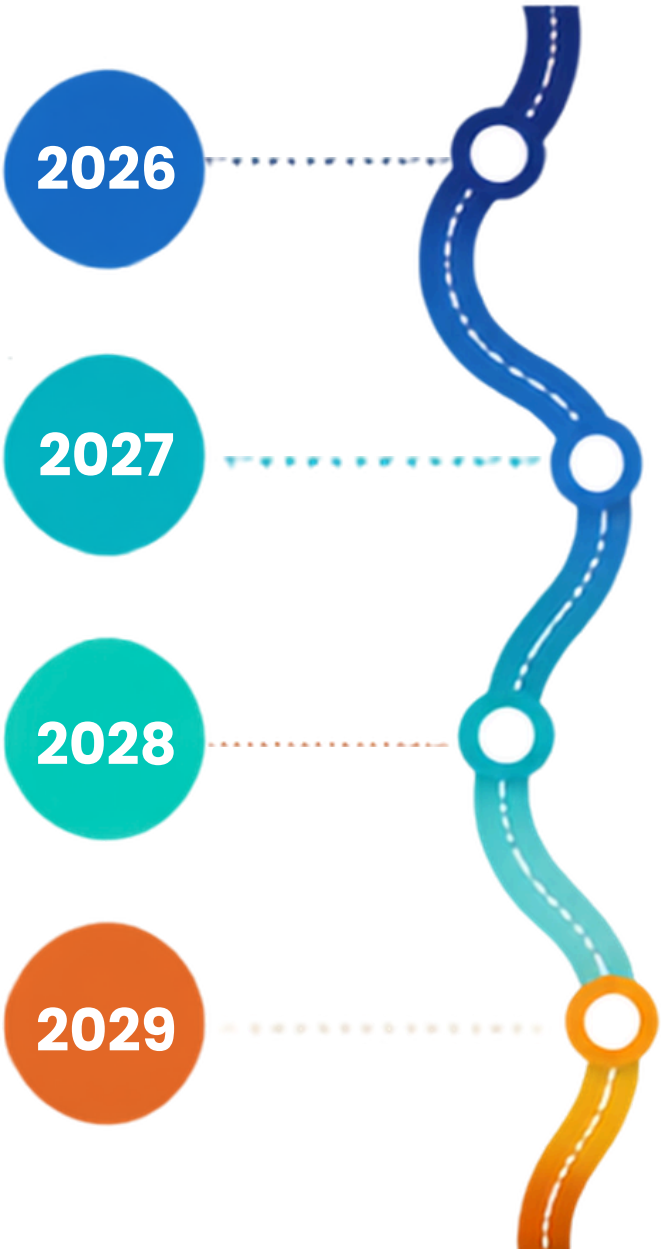
4.  Reform Alternative Provision to focus on early intervention and reintintegration.

5.  Increase local provision and support closer to home.



then children and young people will receive the right support at the earliest opportunity, needs will be identified and addressed sooner, and fewer children will require statutory intervention or specialist placements.

Our roadmap to 2029



Build the foundations. Develop. Pilot.

Together we design new approaches and test them through pilots. Using feedback and data to refine what works best.

Build. Embed. Expand.

We roll out improved services, strengthen our workforce and embed new ways of working across the system.

Improve. Integrate. Influence.

We drive continuous improvement, join up services so support is seamless, and use our learning to influence wider change.

Deliver. Sustain. Celebrate.

A fairer, more inclusive SEND system—delivering better outcomes and opportunities for every child and young person.

On the next pages, you can see what we plan to achieve each year.

2026/27: Building the Foundations

1 Framework and Baseline

- Refresh and relaunch the Graduated Approach through co-production with children, young people, families and professionals.
- Develop the Inclusion Dashboard and establish baseline measures for inclusive practice.
- Design and begin implementation of the Experts at Hand (EAH) model.
- Refresh and roll out Whole School Inclusion Audits.

2 Implementation and Pilots

- Launch locality-based EAH teams and begin delivering training and support.
- Implement recommendations from the Moorbridge review.
- Pilot the Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce (APST).
- Complete a review of specialist provision and funding arrangements.

3 Provision and Support

- Begin development of a specialist nursery for children with the most complex needs.
- Expand Inclusion Bases and continue the Funding for Inclusion programme.
- Map post-16 pathways and establish a Post-16 SEND Network.
- Strengthen governance, co-production and workforce planning.

4 Governance and Transition

- Success indicators will guide our progress.
- Strengthen governance, co-production and workforce planning.
- Prepare for transition to future phases and embed sustainable structures.

2027/28: Embedding Change

1 Partnership and Expertise

- Full implementation of Experts at Hand across all locality areas.
- Embed the refreshed Graduated Approach into training, support and school improvement activity.
- Establish strong links between EAH, Best Start Family Hubs, Family Help, Connexions and the Early Years Partnership.
- Review progress through repeat Inclusion Audits.

2 Implementation and Place

- Roll out Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce approaches more widely.
- Open the specialist nursery and begin delivering placements.
- Continue expansion of Inclusion Bases and specialist provision.
- Align Connexions and post-16 support with SEND reforms.
- Strengthen partnership arrangements and workforce development.

3 Provision and Support

- Align Connexions and post-16 support with SEND reforms.
- Strengthen partnership arrangements and workforce development.
- Prepare for transition to future phases and embed sustainable structures.

2028/29: Achieving sustainability

1 Embedding and Sustaining

- Review and refine all SEND reform programmes using data, stakeholder feedback and lived experience.
- Embed locality working, peer support and collaborative approaches.
- Fully integrate Experts at Hand, Alternative Provision, Early Help, Best Start and mental health support into a single system.
- Complete Inclusion Base expansion programme.

2 Consolidation and Growth

- Establish clear specialist pathways from early years through to adulthood.
- Implement a refreshed post-16 commissioning strategy.
- Embed SEND workforce development and locality networks.
- Transition governance and quality assurance arrangements into business-as-usual delivery.

3 Inclusion and Impact

- Strengthen inclusion and participation across education, training, employment and community life.
- Reduce inequalities, close attainment gaps and widen life chances.
- Embed evidence-informed practice and continuous improvement.
- Strengthen partnerships and sustain co-production with children, young people and families.

4 Governance and Leadership

- Oversee delivery, evaluate outcomes and publish performance.
- Strengthen financial sustainability and secure long-term funding.
- Embed the transformation culture across all services.
- Prepare for future innovation and system resilience.

By 2029 we will have

01



A well established Experts at Hand model providing earlier, coordinated support.

02



A consistent Graduated Approach used across all settings.

03



Stronger inclusive practice and improved workforce confidence.

04



More children and young people having their needs met in mainstream education.

05



Greater local sufficiency and reduced reliance on independent placements.

06



Stronger pathways into adulthood and employment.

07



Increased confidence among children, young people and families.

08



A financially sustainable SEND system focused on early intervention, inclusion and improved outcomes.

Investment to date

Funding for inclusion

£990,000

The Council has invested £990,000 in 47 mainstream schools through the Funding for Inclusion programme to create facilities such as intervention spaces, sensory rooms, call rooms and outdoor theraptuic spaces

Specialist Inclusion bases

North Tyneside has continued to invest in Specialist Inclusion Areas (formerly ARPs and SEND Units) attached to mainstream schools.

Recent investments include:

£542,000

Waterville Primary School:

£542,000 for a new Communication and Interaction Inclusion Base.

£72,000

Benton Dene Primary School:

£72,000 to enhance existing provision.

This work has contributed to a significant increase in specialist places within mainstream schools and supports children to remain within their local communities.

Specialist Schools

Significant investment has also been made to expand maintained special school capacity where specialist provision is required:

£6.01 MILLION

Beacon Hill School:

£6.01 million to create 35 additional places and expanded sixth form provision.

£850,000

Southlands School:

£850,000 to increase capacity and support a revised communication and interaction designation.

£600,000

Silverdale School

£600,000 to increase capacity for pupils with ASD and SEMH needs

Where we'll invest in the future

Expansion of Specialist Inclusion Areas

The local Area Partnership will continue to expand Specialist Inclusion Areas, particularly:

- Secondary-age provision.
- SEMH provision.
- Provision in areas of greatest local demand.

Our ambition remains that all secondary schools will ultimately have access to an Inclusion Base model.

Specialist nursery

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Woodlawn School

A long-term solution is required to address capacity pressures at Woodlawn School, where pupils are currently educated across multiple sites.

Silverdale School

As part of the school's academisation programme, a permanent accommodation solution will be developed to support increasing demand for ASD and SEMH provision.

Moorbridge PRU

Following the review of Alternative Provision, capital investment will support the future operating model for Moorbridge and support modernisation and reconfiguring sites.

Engaging with Children, Young People and Families

The Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and SEND Youth Forum

The Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and SEND Youth Forum will continue to play an important role in SEND Reform. Both are represented within governance arrangements and workstreams, helping to shape priorities, influence decision-making and provide challenge where needed.

Strengthening how we gather and use feedback

Over the next three years, we will strengthen how we gather and use feedback from children, young people and families. We will ensure their views are regularly collected and clearly influence service design, commissioning and evaluation.

SEND Reform Participation Worker

A dedicated SEND Reform Participation Worker will work alongside the Parent Carer Forum to increase engagement, particularly with:

- **Children and young people.**
- **Families from under-represented groups.**
- **Families living in areas of deprivation.**
- **Children and young people with complex needs.**

The Participation Worker will work directly with schools, settings and families to ensure a wider range of voices are heard.

What will be different for your child?

1. Support should come earlier

Families should not feel that they have to wait until things reach crisis point before help is available.

What you'll notice:

- Clearer information about what support is available.
- Earlier help in schools and settings.
- Faster access to advice from specialist professionals.
- Easier routes to access support

2. Schools will be better equipped to meet needs

North Tyneside wants inclusion to become the typical approach across all schools and settings.

What you'll notice:

- More consistent support across schools.
- Staff with greater SEND knowledge and confidence.
- More specialist advice available to mainstream settings.
- Greater focus on helping children succeed in their local school where appropriate.

3. More support available closer to home

The council and partners are investing in local provision so that more children can have their needs met within North Tyneside.

What you'll notice:

- More Inclusion Bases and specialist support in mainstream schools
- A new specialist nursery for children with the most complex needs
- Increased specialist provision within the borough
- Reduced need for children to travel long distances for education and support

What will be different for your child?

4. Easier access to specialist expertise

A new Experts at Hand model will bring together specialist teachers, Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists into local teams supporting schools and families earlier.

What you'll notice:

- Better joined-up support.
- Earlier access to specialist advice.
- Schools receiving help before needs escalate.
- More coordinated services around the child or young person.

5. Better support for emotional wellbeing

Emotional health and wellbeing is a major priority.

What you'll notice:

- More support available through schools.
- Earlier help for emotional wellbeing concerns.
- Better links between education, health and mental health services.

6. Stronger support into adulthood

There will be a greater focus on helping young people prepare for adult life.

What you'll notice:

- Clearer post-16 pathways.
- More opportunities for employment, training and supported internships.
- Better transition planning.
- More support to develop independence and life skills.

7. Families will have a stronger voice

Co-production is at the heart of the plan.

What you'll notice:

- More opportunities to influence services.
- Better communication from SEND services.
- Greater involvement in decision-making.
- Clearer feedback on how family views have shaped changes.